

NFL: New-look Jets feeling 'rebirth' at camp [Back page](#)

TRAVEL: 47 Ronin await at Tokyo temple [Page 32](#)

GAMES: Mario Maker 2 builds on a classic [Page 23](#)

EUROPE
& PACIFIC
WEEKEND
EDITION



MOVIES
Tarantino's
'Once Upon a
Time in Hollywood'
is a valentine to
a bygone era
[Pages 24-25](#)

STARS STRIPES®

[stripes.com](#)

Volume 78, No. 72 ©SS 2019 **FRIDAY, JULY 26, 2019**

平成32年4月5日 第三種郵便物認可 日刊(土日除く)
発行所 星条旗新聞社 〒106-0032 東京都港区六本木7丁目23番17号 定価 ¥100

\$1.00

Deadly explosions rock Kabul

Page 7



Afghans survey the site of a suicide attack in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Thursday. Three bombings struck the Afghan capital on Thursday, killing at least eight people, officials said.

RAHMYAT GUL/AP

North Korea test-fires 2 new ballistic missiles

By **KIM GAMEL**
AND **YOO KYONG CHANG**
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — Up-ping the ante over stalled nuclear talks, North Korea test-fired two new ballistic missiles into the sea off its eastern coast on Thursday, the South said as it expressed "strong concern."

It was the first launch since President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un agreed to resume working-level negotiations that the United States hopes will persuade the communist state to abandon its nuclear weapons.

Earlier this month, the North warned it may restart testing in its nuclear weapons program amid its frustration over the deadlock and anger over joint U.S.-South Korean military exercises expected to take place next month.

Kim also was shown inspecting a new submarine in photos released Wednesday on state-run media.

SEE MISSILES ON PAGE 6



AP/WIDE WORLD

People watch a TV showing images of North Korea's missile launch during a news program Thursday at the Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea.

Commander orders SEAL platoon home for discipline issues

By **CHAD GARLAND**
Stars and Stripes

A commander overseeing U.S. special operations troops battling Islamic State in Iraq has ordered a SEAL platoon to return to San Diego early after a "perceived deterioration of good order and discipline," the military said late Wednesday.

The commander of Special Operations Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve made the order, U.S. Special Operations Command said in a statement.

"The Commander lost confidence in the

team's ability to accomplish the mission," the statement said.

Commanders have already made efforts to mitigate the operational impact of the redeployment, SOCOM said.

Two defense officials with knowledge of the issue told The Washington Post that SEALs had been drinking alcohol in violation of General Order No. 1. The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the issue.

The unit, which one of the officials said is part of SEAL Team 7, was under investigation, both defense officials said. It's not clear

whether they could face criminal charges or administrative punishment, the Post reported.

U.S.-backed Iraqi security forces and other paramilitary groups are in the midst of an operation, dubbed "Will of Victory," to clear remnants of ISIS from an area north of Baghdad and surrounding areas in the Diyala, Salahuddin and Anbar provinces.

Iraq declared victory against ISIS in July 2017, but the terrorist group has transformed into an insurgency that continues to conduct deadly attacks in the country.

SEE PLATOON ON PAGE 7

MILITARY

USAF recruits now training on M4

Preparing for deployment to combat areas

By JAMES BOLINGER
Stars and Stripes

Changes to Air Force basic training this summer include switching to the M4 carbine from the M16 and an increased emphasis on hand-to-hand fighting skills.

Training on the M4 is part of an emphasis on preparing new airmen for deployment into areas of potential combat. The first recruits to qualify pulled triggers July 8 at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas.

Between 20,000 and 30,000 airmen graduate the 8½-week course annually, according to the Air Education and Training Command website.

The M4 is the weapon battle-armsmen would likely carry while deployed to a combat zone, said Chief Master Sgt. Lee Hoover Jr., the superintendent of the 737th Training Group at Lackland.

"While M16s remain in Air Force inventory, the Air Force has been transitioning away from the M16 since the 1990s," Hoover wrote in an email to Stars and Stripes last month. "As a result, most Airmen will deploy using the lighter, smaller, and more versatile M4."

The M4 is shorter than the M16, which allows the shooter to maneuver more freely in urban environments and transition smoothly



SARAYUTH PHINTHONG/U.S. Air Force

U.S. Air Force recruits at Joint Base San Antonio-Medina Annex fire their M4 carbines during a weapons familiarization course on June 8. Recruits are now required to have training on the M4 and in hand-to-hand fighting.

when entering and exiting vehicles, Staff Sgt. Joshua Mitchell, a combat arms instructor from the 18th Security Forces Squadron at Kadena Air Base, Japan, said in an email Thursday.

The M4, a variant of the M16, has an adjustable stock, making it more suitable for close-quarters engagement, according to a military.com fact sheet. It also features a built-in accessory rail that can accommodate a variety of optics.

For Air Force recruits, the switch to M4 training coincides

with three additional hours of range time for a total of eight hours. Trainees will spend an extra hour on the firing line and two additional hours in the classroom, Hoover said.

Trainees will also fire 40 more rounds — a total of 100 — and become familiar with the M-68 "red dot" optic sight and potential causes of M4 failures.

Trainees will now participate in expanded self-defense training that includes physical sparring sessions with protective gear, Hoover said. Those sessions had

been simulated, but the Air Force now requires trainees to apply the techniques on actual opponents in controlled circumstances.

Hoover did not specify the self-defense system being taught in basic training or how the instructors were trained. The sparring sessions were approved by safety professionals and are supervised by training instructors to avoid injuries, he said.

bolinger.james@stripes.com
Twitter: @bolingerj2004

Reserve soldier dies, 2 hurt by fallen tree

BLACKSTONE, Va. — Military officials say a U.S. Army Reserve soldier was killed and two others injured when a large tree was toppled during severe weather in Virginia.

A statement from Fort Pickett on Tuesday says the soldiers were taking part in a training exercise Monday when the incident occurred.

Officials say the incident is under investigation, and the post is providing support to the unit involved.

According to the statement, no Virginia or Kentucky National Guard soldiers were involved in the incident.

Navy airman sentenced in murder-for-hire plot

NORFOLK, Va. — A U.S. Navy airman has been sentenced to 25 years confinement, with 15 years suspended, for attempting to kill his wife in a murder-for-hire plot.

Uriel Gerardo-Olivas was sentenced July 19 following a court-martial at Naval Station Norfolk. Media reports say he also will receive a dishonorable discharge.

In return for pleading guilty to attempted murder, the Navy dropped other charges he was facing. They included communicating a threat, larceny, as well as use of marijuana and solicitation.

Investigators say he offered \$500 to an undercover officer to kill his wife. Authorities say he wanted to kill her to collect on his wife's life insurance policy for another hit.

He was also accused of threatening to kill another sailor and asking a sailor to kidnap another.

From The Associated Press

TODAY IN STRIPES

American Roundup 18
Business 20
Comics 42, 46-47
Faces 43
Opinion 44-45
Sports 54-64
Weather 20
Weekend 21-42

STARS AND STRIPES

However you read us,
wherever you need us.

Mobile • Online • Print

EUROPE

ADVERTISING

KRISTI KIMMEL

CustomerService@stripes.com

+49 (0) 0631.3615.9111
DSN: 315.583.9111

MIDDLE EAST

ADVERTISING

KRISTI KIMMEL

CustomerService@stripes.com

+49 (0) 0631.3615.9111
DSN: 315.583.9111

PACIFIC

ADVERTISING

ICHIRO
KATAYANAGI

CustomerHelp@Stripes.com

+81(3) 6385.3267 DSN 315.229.3267

PCSing? STARS AND STRIPES. RELOCATION GUIDE

Every Friday in the European and Pacific editions
of Stars and Stripes AND online daily at
www.stripes.com/relo



MILITARY

Marines reach target strength in Darwin

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

BRISBANE, Australia — The U.S. rotational force in Darwin, growing since the first Marines arrived there in 2012, has reached its target strength, Australia's Defence Ministry announced Thursday.

"The Marine Rotational Force-Darwin reached a major milestone this week with the arrival of additional US Marines in Darwin, bringing the total number of Marines in the Northern Territory to its full strength of 2,500," the ministry said in a statement.

The number was set by former President Barack Obama when he announced the rotational force's creation during a visit to Darwin in November 2011.

The force, which trains in Australia for six months during the southern hemisphere summer, has built up slowly since an initial contingent of 250 Marines hit the beach there in 2012.

Members of the force have been participating in this month's Talisman Sabre exercise, which has included 34,000 U.S. and Australian servicemembers.

The Darwin rotation is being boosted by a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or HIMARS, platoon for the first time, 1st Lt. Colin Kennard, a spokesman for the rotational force, said in an email Thursday.

"These Marines and equipment, from 3rd Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment in Okinawa, Japan, will provide MRF-D an extended range precision strike capability that can further shape the battlespace," he said.

Also added to the rotation is an infantry battalion — 3rd Battal-



SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

U.S. Marines on a sixth-month rotation to Darwin, Australia, participated in Talisman Sabre drills this week. The Marine Rotational Force in Australia has reached its target strength of 2,500.

ion, 3rd Marine Regiment — out of Marine Corps Base Hawaii; a detachment of Marines from Combat Logistics Battalion 1 based at Camp Pendleton, Calif.; and a shock trauma platoon from 3rd Medical Battalion out of Okinawa, Japan, Kennard said.

"Their inclusion in MRF-D 19 affords more U.S. Marines and Sailors a combined training opportunity with our Australian allies and improves interoperability between our forces," he said.

The 2019 rotation represents the most capable and focused deployment to date, Australian Defence Minister Linda Reynolds said in a statement.

"This milestone demonstrates

the enduring nature of the Australia-U.S. alliance and our deep engagement with the Indo-Pacific region," she said.

"The Marine Rotational Force-Darwin... enhances our ability to work together with regional partners in the interests of stability and security in the Indo-Pacific."

The 2019 rotation, which runs through October, features an HIMARS, the advanced TPS-80 radar and MV-22 Ospreys and UH/AH-1 helicopters, according to the ministry's statement.

The U.S. military is not necessarily looking to further increase the number of U.S. personnel in Australia, according to Air Force Col. Raymond Powell, a defense

attache based in Canberra.

"Marines in Darwin have already reached their full numerical strength," he said in an email Wednesday. "What we continuously seek is opportunities to make our presence here more effective in delivering combat capability, contingency response, and security cooperation throughout the region, especially bilaterally with Australia and multilaterally with our partners and allies."

In addition to the rotational force, another 225 U.S. military personnel are stationed in Australia, Powell said.

"The majority are assigned as exchange and liaison officers with Australian units all around

the country. Unsurprisingly, most of these are assigned along the eastern and southern coasts," Powell said.

Exchange officers are embedded with Australian Defence Force units and headquarters elements and are, generally, completely integrated teammates, he said.

Liaison officers, in contrast, officially represent a U.S. unit or headquarters to an Australian counterpart organization.

There are also small elements that provide administrative support to U.S. forces, and there are a few units conducting missions Down Under such as a U.S. Air Force element at Learmonth Solar Observatory, Powell said.

"The ability to jointly develop, test and exercise our most sophisticated capabilities together with an ally with whom we share so much... trust, national values, experiences, technical expertise... is priceless," Powell said.

"Australia is also an extremely important leader in both the Indo-Pacific region and especially the Oceania sub-region, and we rely on them greatly for this leadership."

U.S. and Australian military personnel are conducting joint testing and development of next-generation weapon systems in both countries, he said.

The Force Posture Initiatives, which includes the Darwin rotation as well as enhanced air force cooperation activities, and a host of other bilateral exercises to include Talisman Sabre are constantly expanding, he said.

robson.seth@stripes.com
Twitter: @SethRobson1

US looks to Greece for more Mediterranean troop rotations

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The United States wants to increase troop rotations into Greece and gain more access to bases that can facilitate missions stretching from the eastern Mediterranean into the Black Sea and Balkans, America's top diplomat in Athens said.

U.S. Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt said Washington and Athens are working on updating a long-standing defense cooperation agreement to enable a wider range of military missions.

Currently, the U.S. military agreement with Greece is centered on operations at the U.S. Navy's base at Souda Bay. However, there is little room for growth at that long-standing military hub, Pyatt said.

"Souda Bay is pretty much full," Pyatt told Greece's Kathimerini newspaper in an interview published Monday.

Pyatt said Greece has many other military facilities that are



JASON EPPERSON/U.S. Army

Spc. Matthew Williams fires a Stinger missile during an exercise off the coast of Crete, Greece, in 2017. The U.S. wants to update its defense cooperation agreement with Greece to gain expanded access to bases in the country.

"under-utilized" and could play a larger role. "And that's one of the priorities as our experts work on the Defense Cooperation Agreement," he told the newspaper.

Pyatt's comments coincided with a visit to Greece on Tuesday by U.S. European Command Gen. Tod Wolters, who held talks with Chief of Defense Gen. Chris-

tos Christodoulou on military ties between the two countries.

"With Greece being such a valuable NATO ally in the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions, we do have a commitment at the highest level to seek opportunities to continue developing our defense relationship and security cooperation," said Lt. Cmdr. Joe

Hontz, a EUCOM spokesman.

The push for a new defense cooperation arrangement with Greece comes as Athens seeks closer military ties with the U.S. Last year, Greece's defense minister invited the U.S. military to set up new bases in the country, citing locations in Larissa, Volos and Alexandroupoli.

The Pentagon has not indicated an interest in new bases or in establishing a large permanent force in Greece. Instead, the emphasis has been on rotations.

Already, the U.S. is operating at sites beyond Souda Bay, including MQ-9 Reaper drones flying from Larissa. Rotational units, including Army combat aviation aircraft, have deployed to other parts of the country.

A new defense cooperation agreement could formalize those arrangements and pave the way for further rotational deployments.

"The tempo of our military engagement today is higher than it has been in decades (and) we have a commitment on the part of

both of our governments to making that exercise series, that rotation series, even bigger and more substantial for the next season," Pyatt said. "So we're well-positioned there."

The collaboration with Greece comes at a time of increased regional tensions, with Athens at odds with Turkey and Russia boosting its military presence in the Mediterranean Sea.

U.S. military officials also have expressed concerns about China's influence in the region.

In 2010, China began buying stakes in the Greek port of Piraeus, eying it as a strategic crossroads for the ambitious "Belt and Road" initiative. China now has full control of the Mediterranean port that is a gateway to southern and central Europe.

"If we want to pull a ship, a warship, into Piraeus, China can say no," a EUCOM official told Stars and Stripes in May.

vandiver.john@stripes.com
Twitter: @john_vandiver

PACIFIC



Aya ICHIHASHI/Stars and Stripes

Cpl. Sarah Stegall, of Fidelis Rides, checks the blood-alcohol level of volunteer driver Cpl. Angelo Garavito recently at Camp Foster, Okinawa. The volunteer program that offers free rides to servicemembers has drawn complaints from local taxi companies but is not in competition with them.

Marines say Okinawa free-ride service doesn't take business from local taxis

By AYA ICHIHASHI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A volunteer program on Okinawa that provides servicemembers with free rides after a weekend night on the town is not meant to compete with local taxi drivers, a base commander said recently.

Created in March by Sgt. 1st Class Jacob Karl to help Marines without cars or a lot of spending money, Fidelis Rides provides free lifts on Friday and Saturday nights to any servicemember who requests one. American Forces Network and the Social Networking Service Okinawa Facebook page have both publicized the service.

But a pair of local newspapers — the Ryukyu Shimpo and Okinawa Times — reported recently that “Y-plate taxi services” were taking business away from local taxi companies.

The all-volunteer service is not a money-making venture and is not meant to compete with local taxi services, said Col. Vincent Cuccoli, commander of Camp Foster and Camp Lester. Marine Corps Installations Pacific in a July 12 Facebook post stated that providing ride-sharing services for money without a taxi license is illegal under Japanese law.

“We are not trying to steal any customers from local taxi drivers,” he said. “Those servicemembers who call us don’t have money to get a taxi anyway.”

Fidelis Rides operates from 5 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Fridays and Saturdays. About 20 regular volunteers in the program spare as many as 10 hours a night for the program. With 100-150 volunteers, Fidelis Rides could cover the entire island more often, Cuccoli said.

“Currently, we are covering the Kadena, Foster and Futema areas, but if we get enough volunteers in the future, we may be able to expand the program’s hours and areas,” he said.

Cpl. Angelo Garavito, 21, of Headquarters and Support Battalion, has been volunteering for three months, usually all night Fridays and Saturdays, because he’d rather help others than get drunk or party, he said.

Any active-duty servicemember, their spouses and dependents are welcome to volunteer as a dispatcher, driver or as an A-driver that navigates and assists the driver, Cuccoli said. The program also needs volunteers to serve as a marketing person to spread the word or administrative workers to keep the volunteer logs.

Volunteer drivers must have a valid license under the status of forces agreement, car insurance, well-

maintained vehicles with Japan Compulsory Insurance and base access, Cuccoli said.

There are no specific rules on the age for volunteering, but Cuccoli said he feels “more comfortable” if the dependents are at least 18 years old and accompanied by their active-duty sponsors while providing rides for servicemembers.

“This is a great program for young Marines or even high school seniors to learn the new roads off base or have a chance to talk to Marines and learn about us,” he said.

The program is run from the Camp Foster USO office, which also hosts a late-night meal program until 2 a.m.

When the phone rings on a typical Friday or Saturday night, a dispatcher coordinates with volunteer driver teams — one driver and one A-driver — to send a car to pick up servicemembers on and off base. Three volunteer cars usually cover 110 miles and pick up 80-100 passengers per night, Cuccoli said.

“We are happy to support our servicemembers for such a wonderful program,” said Angela Tom, a center manager for USO Camp Foster.

Fidelis Rides is available only to active-duty servicemembers of all branches; however, friends or family accompanying the servicemember are welcome to ride with them.

Cpl. Sarah Stegall, 24, of Headquarters and Support Battalion, said the volunteer driver is checked out before they are dispatched.

“The driver must pass the Breathalyzer test first,” Stegall said.

The car is inspected to ensure it’s in proper condition and insured, and the driver is checked for a valid license, she said.

“Lastly, the volunteer driver must sign the statement of understanding before taking off,” she said.

The volunteers may not accept money in exchange for the ride and they must pay all of their costs in gas and tolls.

“This is a grassroots volunteer program for [a quality-of-life] initiative,” Cuccoli said. “We are not funded nor operated by command. If you want to help people who don’t have that much money to get a taxi, please join us.”

Those on Okinawa who’d like to use Fidelis Rides or volunteer can call 090-6861-3348. The group also has a Facebook page, www.facebook.com/FidelisRides.

ichihashi.aya@starsandstripes.com
Twitter: @AyaIchihashi

Soldier detained after taxi incident in South Korea

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — An American soldier was detained after he reportedly scuffled with police and tried to steal a taxi after a night out drinking in Seoul over the weekend.

The incident occurred more than a month after U.S. Forces Korea, the main command for the 28,500 servicemembers stationed in the South, temporarily lifted a 1 to 5 a.m. off-installation curfew that had been in place for years.

The 21-year-old soldier, who is assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division, was angered when a taxi driver refused to let him into the car about 5:30 a.m. Saturday in the trendy neighborhood of Itaewon, the Korea Broadcasting System reported.

The incident remained under investigation and the soldier was in the custody of his chain of command, the 2nd ID said Thursday, declining to provide more details due to the ongoing investigation.

According to the KBS report, the soldier hit the driver, then tried to drive away in the taxi after the driver got out to talk to police, but the taxi was crashed into a fire hydrant.

The soldier scuffled with police and tried to run away, but the officers subdued him with a stun gun, according to the report. He was detained on suspicion of assault and property damage but was released to American military authorities in accordance with the status of forces agreement between the allies.

“We are aware of the incident involving a U.S. soldier and the Korean National Police in Itaewon last weekend and are cooperating fully with all legal authorities,” said 2nd ID spokesman Lt. Col. Martyn Crighton. “We take this matter very seriously. We are committed to ensuring our soldiers obey Korean laws, U.S. military regulations and remain good neighbors with the Korean community.”

South Korean police could not immediately be reached to independently confirm the details.

The military suspended the much-hated curfew for 90 days beginning on June 17, saying the decision would be reviewed on Sept. 17, in a test for servicemembers.

USFK commander Gen. Robert Abrams will decide in September whether to continue the evaluation period, maintain or rescind the curfew, which required that troops be on base, in their residences or hotel rooms during the specified hours.

Officials said at the time that the curfew’s suspension was aimed at improving morale and making South Korea a more at-

tractive assignment, as well as giving troops a chance to see more of the country.

Abrams retweeted a post about the taxi incident from “U.S. Army W.T.F! Moments.”

“Being a good battletuddy includes being with your battle buddy and not letting them wander off. We are guests here,” he added in a comment. “We are also Ambassadors who represent our country on and off duty. Below is an example of not being a good Ambassador.”

Lt. Col. Martyn Crighton
2nd ID spokesman

Stars and Stripes reporter Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this report.

game.kim@starsandstripes.com
Twitter: @kingame1

ABC
TRAVEL SERVICE

**You need a getaway?
What about a cruise?**

Royal Caribbean
Western Caribbean Cruise
from 696€

**Just give us a call
0621-72920
www.abctravel.de**

Based on availability. ABC Travel Service e.K., Gorchowstr. 5, 68309 Mannheim

MILITARY

DOD deputy secretary nominee backs budget pact

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The new two-year federal budget agreement “does right by the men and women in uniform,” David Norquist said Wednesday during his confirmation hearing to be the next deputy defense secretary.

The agreement, which brings the defense budget to \$738 billion for fiscal year 2020, will allow the military to avoid continuing resolutions and sequestration and provide two years of planning, Norquist, the Pentagon's chief financial officer, told the Senate Armed Services Committee. The legislative agreement made Monday by congressional leadership and the White House included a compromise on President Donald Trump's proposed defense budget request of \$750 billion and the House Democrats who put forth a defense budget at \$733 billion.

Norquist's confirmation hearing is the second that the Senate Armed Services Committee has held in two weeks — the other was for now-Defense Secretary Mark Esper — as the committee works to help fill critical leadership positions at the Pentagon.

Just like in Esper's confirmation process, Norquist had his nomination from Trump sent



PHOTOS BY JOE GROMELSKI/Stars and Stripes

Senate Armed Services Committee ranking member Jack Reed, D-R.I., above, questions Defense Department Comptroller David Norquist, right, during Norquist's deputy secretary of defense confirmation hearing Wednesday.

to the Senate the day before the hearing, which had been scheduled about a week out in anticipation of the nomination.

Since January, Norquist had been performing the duties of deputy defense secretary after his predecessor, Patrick Shanahan, stepped up to assume the role of acting defense secretary.

Last night after Esper was sworn in as defense secretary, he delegated the duties of deputy defense secretary from Norquist to Navy Secretary Richard Spencer in deference to the Senate con-

firmation process rules. While Norquist awaits the Senate's confirmation of him as deputy defense secretary, he has returned full time to his position as the Pentagon's comptroller and chief financial officer, which he has held since 2017.

Senators voiced support during the hearing for Norquist's nomination and confirmation, including Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., chairman of the committee, who said he might be the wrong person to be chairman of the hearing because he had already decided



to support Norquist.

“In fact, I remember telling the president a long time ago it doesn't matter who ends up being secretary of defense, so long as you have Norquist in there to help,” he said.

Norquist's work on the Defense Department's first full audit, released in November, was commended by several senators, including Sen. Angus King, I-Maine, who called Norquist the “father of the audit” and implored him not to lose focus on the audit if confirmed.

“(It's) One of the most important missions that the department has,” he said of the audit. “It's important to us to be able to reassure our citizens, our constituents ... that we're paying attention to where the money is going and that we have a handle on it.”

Norquist assured him that he would.

Norquist also said one of the first things he would do if over-see the implementation of recommendations from a task force set up by former acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan to address sexual assault in the military.

The Sexual Assault Accountability and Investigation Task Force focuses on improving the military judicial process. It was set up in partnership with Sen. Martha McSally, R-Ariz., a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, who is a survivor of sexual assault during her military service.

The task force released several recommendations in May that include updating the Uniformed Code of Military Justice to make sexual harassment a stand-alone crime.

kenney.caitlin@stripes.com
Twitter: @caitlmkenney

**Car Loan
Decisions in
Five Minutes
or Less**



Easily apply with our mobile app,¹
online or at your local branch.

navyfederal.org/auto

**NAVY
FEDERAL**
Credit Union®

ARMY
MARINE CORPS
NAVY
AIR FORCE
COAST GUARD
VETERANS

You know what you want. We can help you get it. Get the car of your dreams with a Navy Federal car loan.²

- Fast approval process
- Great interest rates
- Low monthly payments

Stationed Abroad?

Use our Overseas Auto Buying Program and get up-front guaranteed pricing.

Visit navyfederalautooverseas.com for details.

Insured by NCUA. Message and data rates may apply. Visit navyfederal.org for more information. ¹Credit and collateral subject to approval. Image used for representational purposes only; does not imply government endorsement. © 2019 Navy Federal NRCU 10297-B (5-19)

MILITARY

US sends another warship through Taiwan Strait

By CATLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Navy has sent yet another ship through the Taiwan Strait in what so far this year is an almost monthly event, according to Bloomberg News.

The cruiser USS Anietiam on Wednesday and Thursday sailed through the 110-mile-wide strait that separates mainland China from the island, which Beijing regards as a breakaway province. The U.S. considers Taiwan's status unsettled but adheres to the "One China" policy, acknowledging that China asserts sovereignty over Taiwan.

Seventh Fleet officials did not respond to requests for comment Thursday.

China regularly protests Taiwan Strait transits and asserts foreign vessels must first ask permission before sailing through, but international law considers the strait an open waterway.

Seventh Fleet spokesman Cmdr. Clay Doss said in a statement the strait transit "demonstrates the U.S. commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific," according to the Bloomberg report Thursday.

"The U.S. Navy will continue

to fly, sail and operate anywhere international law allows," he said, according to Bloomberg. The statement is the standard response to post-transit requests for comment.

Also Wednesday, prior to the Anietiam's transit, Beijing in a white paper on national defense complained of "the U.S. illegal entry into China's territorial waters and maritime and air spaces near relevant islands and reefs, and wide-range and frequent close-in reconnaissance."

The white paper, published by China's State Council Information Office, referred to U.S. passage through waters claimed by China as "wrong practices and provocative activities." Navy vessels on freedom of navigation operations regularly pass close to island chains claimed by China in the South China Sea.

The U.S. "has provoked and intensified competition among major countries, significantly increased its defense expenditure, pushed for additional capacity in nuclear, outer space, cyber and missile defense, and undermined global strategic stability," according to the white paper.

It also criticized the U.S. for approving a \$2.2 billion arms deal for Taiwan early this month.

16 Marines arrested

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — An investigation into human smuggling has led to the arrest of 16 Marines.

The Marine Corps said the arrests at Camp Pendleton, Calif., were carried out during a battalion formation Thursday morning at the base north of San Diego.

The Marine Corps said in a news release that information gained after two Marines were arrested on human smuggling

charges earlier this summer led to the arrests.

Officials say the Marines are accused of various illegal activities ranging from human smuggling to drug-related offenses.

Another eight are being questioned about their alleged involvement in drug offense as part of a separate investigation.

The military says none of the Marines were involved in helping to enforce border security.



ANH YOUNG-100M/AP

Visitors pass a map showing North Korea's capital, Pyongyang, and South Korea's capital, Seoul, near South Korea's border with the North on Thursday. North Korea fired two short-range missiles into the sea Thursday, South Korea's military said.

Missiles: South expresses 'strong concern'

FROM FRONT PAGE

North Korea fired the missiles about 20 minutes apart from the Hodo peninsula north of Wonsan, which has been the site of past launches into the sea, the military said, adding that the first one flew about 260 miles and the second more than 428 miles.

The missiles, which were presumed to have been launched from a truck known as a transporter erector launcher, both reached an altitude of some 32 miles, according to the South's Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Details trickled out throughout the day. On Thursday afternoon, President Moon Jae-in's national security council issued a statement saying its initial analysis shows the projectiles were "a new type of short-range ballistic missile."

It promised a final judgment after a detailed joint assessment with the United States.

"The committee expressed strong concern that such actions by North Korea are not helpful to the efforts of alleviating military tensions on the Korean Peninsula," the statement said.

North Korea also fired two short-range missiles along with multiple rocket launcher systems in early May.

Kim agreed to suspend nuclear and long-range missile tests last year as diplomacy gained momentum. He didn't say anything about short-range missiles, although all ballistic missile activ-

ity is banned under U.N. Security Council resolutions that impose economic sanctions against the North.

Trump expressed little concern about the May launch. He met with Kim about two months later in an impromptu encounter in the truce village on the heavily fortified border that divides the Korean Peninsula.

Trump said the two leaders agreed to resume working-level negotiations to break the deadlock that followed their February summit in Vietnam, which collapsed without an agreement due to sharp differences over sanctions relief. No date has been set.

Melissa Hanham, deputy director of the Open Nuclear Network program, said the missiles fired Thursday fit the same profile as those launched in May, which appeared to be a version of Russia's Iskander missile. The missiles were likely solid-fuel and nuclear-capable and could threaten large populations as well as U.S. forces stationed in South Korea, she said in a telephone interview.

"Short-range missiles like these have a lot of advantages for North Korea because they can be moved around easily and they're harder to monitor," she said.

Experts also have noted the relatively low altitude of the missiles could be designed to evade detection by an advanced U.S. defense battery known as THAAD, which is positioned in a rural area southeast of Seoul.

North Korea has a track record

of staging provocations by demonstrating its continued military capabilities in a bid to gain leverage in talks.

"The Kim regime likely times these tests for international signaling purposes, applying political pressure on the U.S. and South Korea in an effort to get more for less in future negotiations," said Leif-Eric Easley, associate professor of international studies at Ewha Womans University in Seoul.

The latest launch came on the heels of a visit to South Korea by U.S. national security adviser John Bolton, who is hated by the North Koreans. It also deals a challenge to Defense Secretary Mark Esper, who was sworn in Tuesday seven months after the post was vacated by Jim Mattis, who resigned.

The North also has expressed strong objections to plans by the United States and South Korea to hold joint exercises in coming weeks despite efforts by the allies to scale them down in size and lower their profile.

Japanese Defense Minister Takeshi Iwaya said the missile test on Thursday was probably a violation of UNSC resolutions.

"If they were ballistic missiles, they violate U.N. sanctions, and I find it extremely regrettable," he was quoted as saying.

game.kim@stripes.com
Twitter: @kingamekim
chang.kyong@stripes.com

Boeing drops out of bidding for nuclear missile replacement

The Washington Post

Boeing says it will withdraw from a massive Pentagon program to replace America's ground-based nuclear missiles, citing concerns with how the Pentagon has handled the procurement.

The move makes Northrop Grumman the sole bidder for the massive contract, effectively locking it into a military program that should be worth tens of billions of dollars over several decades.

"After numerous attempts to resolve concerns within the procurement process, Boeing has informed the Air Force that it will not bid Ground Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD) Engineering and Manufacturing Development (EMD) under the current acquisition approach," said Todd Blecher, a spokesman with Boeing's defense, space and security division. "We've evaluated these issues extensively, and

determined that the current acquisition approach does not provide a level playing field for fair competition."

The Ground Based Strategic Deterrent program is designed to replace the Minuteman III missiles, which have been in use since the 1960s.

Boeing's decision to drop out of the ballistic missile program significantly complicates the Pentagon's earlier plan to rene-

giate the contract. In 2017 the Air Force limited the competition to Boeing and Northrop Grumman, effectively rejecting a bid by Lockheed Martin. Boeing and Northrop were awarded contracts worth \$349.2 million and \$328 million, respectively, to develop competing offers.

The Air Force had hoped to weigh both companies' options to get the best missile for the lowest possible price, according to a

contract solicitation announced last week. Now, the Pentagon will have to either start the procurement over or try negotiate with Northrop Grumman despite having no competing options.

Loren Thompson, a defense consultant who works with Boeing, said the dispute arose from Northrop Grumman's 2017 acquisition of a company called Orbital ATK, a dominant producer of rocket motors.

MILITARY

Fatal blasts rock Afghan capital as Dunford visits

BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Three bombs exploded in the Afghan capital Thursday morning, killing at least 11 people, in violence that coincided with a visit by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

No U.S. or coalition personnel were hurt in the separate blasts, NATO officials in Afghanistan said.

The attacks killed 11 civilians and wounded at least 45, said Interior Ministry spokesman Nasrat Rahimi, who added that at least one child was among the victims and that the death toll could rise.

At least eight of those killed were Mines and Petroleum Min-

istry employees, the ministry said in a statement.

A bomb attached to a vehicle carrying the ministry workers exploded, and soon after a suicide bomber on a motorcycle blew himself up at the scene, Rahimi said.

Islamic State claimed responsibility for the two blasts via its Amaq news agency.

Another suicide bomber detonated a car in eastern Kabul shortly afterward.

The Taliban claimed the attack and said they were targeting foreign forces; however, NATO officials said their forces were not involved in any of the bombings.

Also on Thursday, six women and three children from the same family were killed when their



RAHMAT GUL/AP

Afghan men salvage belongings at their shops following a suicide attack in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Thursday. Three bombings struck the Afghan capital on Thursday, killing at least 11 people.

vehicle hit a roadside bomb in eastern Nangarhar province, the provincial governor's office said.

The bomb blasts occurred during Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Joseph Dunford's visit to the capital, where he consulted with U.S., NATO and Afghan officials, the Pentagon said.

His trip comes after the Afghan government earlier this week called on the U.S. to clarify remarks made by President

Donald Trump about the war in Afghanistan.

Speaking ahead of a meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan in Washington on Monday, Trump said he had plans that would win the war, but it would cost 10 million lives and wipe Afghanistan "off the face of the Earth."

He also said he had chosen not to do that.

Washington is working toward

a diplomatic solution that would allow U.S. troops to exit the conflict.

While in Kabul, Dunford met with U.S. peace envoy for Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad, Reuters reported. The eighth round of peace negotiations between the U.S. and the Taliban is expected to start within days.

Zubair Babakarkhail contributed to this report.
wellman.phillip@stripes.com
Twitter: @pwwellman

Platoon: Action follows several high-profile incidents

FROM FRONT PAGE

Increased scrutiny

The apparent breakdown in discipline within the elite Navy team, which the statement said occurred "during non-operational periods," comes in the wake of the court-martial of SEAL Chief Petty Officer Edward Gallagher, who was acquitted of murder charges in the 2017 killing of a wounded Islamic State captive under his care in Iraq.

The military jury also cleared Gallagher of attempted murder in the shootings of two civilians and all other charges except for posing for photos with the body of the dead captive.

The trial was one of the Navy's most high-profile war crimes cases and had drawn support for Gallagher from President Donald Trump and dozens of Republican lawmakers.

It was one of several cases in recent months that have drawn scrutiny on the special operations communities that have borne the strain of a high operational tempo over more than 17 years of war in the Middle East.

In June, former Green Beret Maj. Matthew Golsteyn pleaded not guilty in a military court to allegations that he wrongfully killed an unarmed Afghan man in Helmand province almost a decade ago.

Also in recent months, two U.S. special operations troops pleaded guilty for their parts in the June 2017 fatal strangulation of Green

Beret Staff Sgt. Logan Melgar in Mali.

As part of arrangements with military prosecutors, a Navy SEAL Team 6 member and a Marine Raider both agreed to testify against two others — Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer Tony DeDolph and Marine Raider Gunnery Sgt. Mario Madera-Rodriguez — who face several charges, including murder, for Melgar's death.

Drug use allegations

The announced redeployment from Iraq comes just days after Military Times reported that it had obtained an internal Navy investigation that found several SEAL Team 10 members busted for cocaine use in May 2018 had snorted the substance or spiked alcohol cocktails with it and cheated drug tests to avoid getting caught.

The recent incidents were part of a trend of misconduct within the special operations command, which in December prompted Gen. Tony Thomas, the SOCOM boss at the time, to launch an internal review throughout the command.

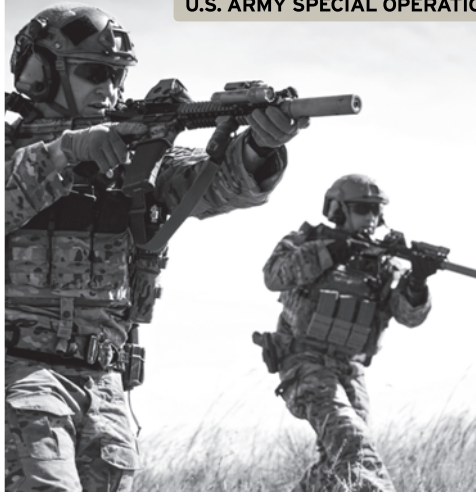
SOCOM's statement on Wednesday offered few details about what occurred in Iraq to raise the commander's concern there.

"All Department of Defense personnel are expected to uphold proven standards and to comply with laws and regulations," the statement said. "Alleged violations are thoroughly investigated."

garland.chad@stripes.com
Twitter: @chadgarland

ACCOMPLISH WHAT OTHERS CAN'T

U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS



Special Forces

goarmysof.com

MILITARY

Boxer in Bahrain days after drone conflict

By JOSHUA KARSTEN
AND CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

MANAMA, Bahrain — The USS Boxer pulled into Bahrain's Khalifa bin Salman Port on Thursday for a visit, days after the amphibious assault ship made headlines for downing at least one Iranian drone in the Strait of Hormuz.

The Boxer's crew, roughly 2,000 sailors and Marines, are expected to rest and relax while in the kingdom, which lies across from Iran in the Persian Gulf. The command has not specified any activities while in port.

The ship reportedly engaged two drones as it transited to the Persian Gulf last week, taking defensive action against a fixed-wing drone that had flown "within a threatening range" on the morning of July 18. President Donald Trump, saying it was an Iranian drone, said it was destroyed after coming within about 1,000 yards of the vessel.

The ship may have taken out a second unmanned aircraft during the incident, Gen. Kenneth McKenzie, head of U.S. Central Command, said to a CBS News reporter aboard the ship before its port call. The two engagements happened about an hour apart, he said, but he was only "confident" that one of the drones was brought down.

The drone was reportedly disabled by Marines of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit aboard the Boxer using an electronic jamming device known as a Light Marine Air Defense Integrated System, or LMADIS, as manned and unmanned Iranian aircraft have been a hot zone at the center of tensions with Iran in recent months. These included attacks on six commercial vessels since May that Washington has blamed on Tehran and the seizure last week of a British oil tanker by Iranian patrol boats.

A chokepoint at the entrance to the Persian Gulf and a major thoroughfare for oil and other cargo, the narrow waterway has been a hot zone at the center of tensions with Iran in recent months. These included attacks on six commercial vessels since May that Washington has blamed on Tehran and the seizure last week of a British oil tanker by Iranian patrol boats.

The Boxer, along with attached 11th MEU and two support ships, arrived in Middle East waters in June as the U.S. deployed troops and equipment to the region, including a carrier-strike group and bomber task force, in response to what Washington said were increased threats against U.S. personnel or property from Iran or its proxy forces. Iran-backed militants are active in Yemen and Iraq.

Over the weekend, CENTCOM said it was preparing to send



PHOTOS BY JOSHUA KARSTEN/Stars and Stripes

The Navy Exchange at Naval Station Bahrain welcomes USS Boxer sailors and Marines during a scheduled port visit on Thursday.

ing to base or landing.

The purported splashing of the drone comes about a month after Iranian forces shot down a U.S. military spy drone with a surface-to-air missile. U.S. officials claimed the drone was in international airspace over the Strait of Hormuz, while Tehran claimed the drone had ventured into Iranian airspace.

A chokepoint at the entrance to the Persian Gulf and a major thoroughfare for oil and other cargo, the narrow waterway has been a hot zone at the center of tensions with Iran in recent months. These included attacks on six commercial vessels since May that Washington has blamed on Tehran and the seizure last week of a British oil tanker by Iranian patrol boats.

The Boxer, along with attached 11th MEU and two support ships, arrived in Middle East waters in June as the U.S. deployed troops and equipment to the region, including a carrier-strike group and bomber task force, in response to what Washington said were increased threats against U.S. personnel or property from Iran or its proxy forces. Iran-backed militants are active in Yemen and Iraq.

Over the weekend, CENTCOM said it was preparing to send



The amphibious assault ship USS Boxer arrives at Bahrain's Khalifa bin Salman Port on Thursday. Last week, U.S. officials said the ship destroyed at least one Iranian drone while in the Persian Gulf.

troops to Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia — the first time in more than a decade that U.S. servicemembers will be deployed there — as part of about 2,000 additional forces being sent to the region.

CENTCOM is also developing an international maritime coalition to increase surveillance and security and to ensure freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf as well as the Bab el-Mandeb strait, which connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden

near Yemen, the command said last week. The U.S. is expected to provide surveillance and other support and is seeking partner countries in Europe, the Middle East and elsewhere in Asia to escort vessels under their flags.

It was not immediately clear how long the Boxer will remain in the area. The Navy's 5th Fleet said only that it was a scheduled port call.

karsten.joshua@stripes.com
Twitter: @joshua_karsten
garland.chad@stripes.com
Twitter: @chadgarland

British navy to escort ships through Strait of Hormuz

The Washington Post

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Britain has begun sending navy ships to accompany vessels traveling through the narrow Strait of Hormuz following the seizure of a British-flagged tanker by Iranian forces.

In a statement, Britain's Department of Defense said that "the Royal Navy has been tasked to accompany British-flagged ships through the Strait of Hormuz, either individually or in groups, should sufficient notice be given of their passage."

The HMS Montrose, a Royal Navy Type 23 frigate, became the first navy ship to offer an escort overnight on Wednesday into Thursday in the narrow waterway, Sky News reported Thursday, citing shipping industry sources.

Britain made the decision just days after the seizure by Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps of the Stena Impero, a British-flagged tanker, as it passed through the Strait of Hormuz on Friday.

The seizure was widely interpreted as a tit-for-tat measure in response to British marines taking part in the seizure of an Iranian-flagged tanker near Gibraltar, a British overseas territory off the coast of Spain.

On Wednesday, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani appeared to suggest that Tehran would consider releasing the Stena Impero if Britain released the Grace 1.

Britain has previously suggested that seizure of the Iranian tanker needed to be resolved by Gibraltar's courts and called on Iran to provide evidence that the tanker was not en route to Syria. U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper announced Wednesday that the U.S. would also be sending its own escorts for U.S.-flagged ships in the region.

"The Brits are escorting their ships," Esper said. "We will escort our ships to the degree that the risk demands it. Assume that other countries will escort their ships."

Top Navy auditor accused of harassment dating to 2007

Bloomberg

The Navy's top auditor was promoted to the job despite a series of sexual harassment allegations against him by multiple women, Rep. Jackie Speier said in a letter to Navy Secretary Richard Spencer and another senior official.

Navy Auditor General Ronnie E. Booth has been accused of a "pattern of harassment, advances on them, and hostility in the workplace" that has been "documented at

length in multiple sources" dating to 2007, Speier, a California Democrat who heads a defense subcommittee, wrote in a July 16 letter seen by Bloomberg.

According to the letter, the auditor allegedly demonstrated a "pattern of behavior, in which Mr. Booth offers to mentor female subordinates, suggests he meet them, outside of work hours, arranges travel with the women and subsequently makes inappropriate advances on them," Speier wrote.

Booth, a 32-year veteran of Navy audit-

ing assignments who now directs about 340 employees and oversees a \$47 million annual operating budget, referred questions about the accusations to Cmdr. Sarah Higgins, a spokeswoman for Spencer.

In a statement, Higgins said Spencer "takes allegations of sexual harassment seriously. If the Office of the Secretary of the Navy receives an allegation, the staff refers the information to the appropriate body of jurisdiction. Due to privacy concerns and to preserve the integrity of the

process, we will not comment further."

In addition to a 12-year-old allegation by one woman, Speier wrote that she is "aware of five other women who have had similar experiences since then, at least three of whom reported through formal channels."

The Pentagon's inspector general has a copy of Speier's letter and is reviewing whether to open an inquiry but no decision has been made, according to a person with knowledge of the issue.

MILITARY

NM demands action from Air Force on contamination

By SUSAN MONTYOYA BRYAN
Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Top New Mexico officials want the U.S. Air Force to immediately begin defining the boundaries of plumes of contamination at two bases in the state and provide alternate water supplies to affected residents.

Attorney General Hector Balderas and the New Mexico Environment Department on Wednesday filed a motion seeking a preliminary injunction to require regular groundwater and surface water sampling as the case proceeds.

They also want the Air Force to offer voluntary blood tests for residents who may have been exposed to the contamination as well as provide additional documentation on the extent of contamination around

Cannon and Holloman air bases.

The state sued in April, saying the federal government has a responsibility to clean up toxic chemicals left behind by past military firefighting activities.

"I am extremely frustrated that the Air Force has not been responsive to protecting the health and safety of New Mexican families by addressing years of environmental pollution," Balderas said in a statement.

The contamination is linked to chemicals known as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS.

The Air Force has not commented directly on the pending litigation but has argued its response to PFAS contamination in New Mexico and elsewhere has been aggressive.

Officials have said they've been working with regulators to identify and implement

long-term solutions to prevent exposure.

New Mexico environmental regulators first issued a notice of violation to the Air Force in 2018 for failing to properly address the contamination at Cannon Air Force Base near Clovis. They followed earlier this year on Holloman, saying that base had violated its state permit and had yet to respond to concerns about the pollution near Alamogordo.

Balderas in May requested that a publicly accessible lake at Holloman be closed to limit exposure after sampling indicated PFAS contamination was dozens of times higher than federal health advisory levels.

Fed by treated wastewater from the base, the lake already is off-limits to swimming but camping is allowed along the shoreline.

Balderas' office said Wednesday it be-

lieved the lake was still open.

Similar contamination has been found at dozens of military sites across the nation, and growing evidence that exposure can be dangerous has prompted the EPA to consider setting a maximum level for the chemicals in drinking water nationwide. Currently only nonenforceable drinking water health advisories are in place.

Members of New Mexico's congressional delegation have argued that the contamination needs to be addressed.

A defense spending bill pending in Congress includes some provisions aimed at tackling PFAS, from funding further study on the best ways to clean up and dispose of contaminated groundwater and soils to assistance for dairies and other affected businesses.

GAO: VA still lags on reliable tracking of health care wait times

By NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs still fails to reliably track wait times for veterans seeking health care in the wake of a national scandal that five years ago found more than 200 veterans died while waiting for appointments, a federal watchdog agency reported.

The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing Wednesday to assess the VA's progress on wait times. This year marks the fifth anniversary of the wait-time scandal, which was first uncovered at the Phoenix VA hospital. It was later revealed the problems permeated the VA health care system.

Debra Draper, director of health care with the Government Accountability Office, told lawmakers that the VA has made some progress since the watchdog began reporting on access issues in 2012, but there are still more shortcomings.

"At this time, we continue to be concerned that VA has not sufficiently addressed the reliability of its wait-time data," Draper said. "Long wait times and weaknesses in the scheduling system have remained persistent and have hindered veterans' ability to

access care."

In a report accompanying her testimony, Draper wrote the VA's procedure for tracking wait times included only a portion of the appointment-scheduling process. When veterans use the VA to seek care from private doctors, they could potentially wait up to 70 days to see a provider despite the agency having a goal of 30 days, the report states. The GAO first made those findings in 2018, and the VA has yet to implement its recommendations, Draper wrote.

In 2017, the GAO found some veterans waited three months to be enrolled into VA health care. The watchdog made several recommendations at that time, but the VA has yet to finalize them, either.

To improve, the VA needs a new scheduling system, clear and consistent policies, adequate oversight and effective training, she said.

The VA is expected to implement a new scheduling system in all medical facilities by 2021.

"The new system that's expected to roll out in the next couple of years will be effective, but it won't solve all of the problems," Draper said. "They'll have to have training, oversight and accountability, and other things all together."



Joe Gromelski/Stars and Stripes

Awaiting the start of a House Veterans' Affairs Committee hearing Wednesday on wait times at VA hospitals are Dr. Debra A. Draper, left, director of the Government Accountability Office's health care team, and Dr. Teresa S. Boyd, Veterans Health Administration assistant deputy under secretary for health for clinical operations.

Delays still exist. The VA Office of Inspector General reported Tuesday about the Albuquerque, N.M., VA hospital, where patients were found to have limited access to mental health services. Some veterans had waited longer than 90 days for an appointment. Employees told the OIG that the delays were caused by shortages of medical staff and schedulers.

VA officials testified Wednesday that it has undergone "tremendous transformation" since

2014, when it was discovered some VA officials kept secret wait lists. An investigation by the VA Office of Inspector General found 215 veterans died while waiting to see specialists in Phoenix.

"We recognize there are still challenges ahead of us, but it is important to keep in mind that veterans continue to receive the highest quality care, often with shorter wait times than in the private sector," said Teresa Boyd, an assistant deputy undersecretary

with the VA.

It's difficult to compare wait times between the VA and the private medical sector because there's not a standard method for calculating them, said Kenneth Kizer, executive vice president of Atlas Research and a former VA undersecretary for health. Moreover, private-sector providers don't routinely make their wait times public.

wentling.nikki@stripes.com
Twitter: @nikkiwentling

Board reinstates Naval Academy professor with back pay

Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — A U.S. Naval Academy professor who was removed by the academy after an investigation into his conduct in class was reinstated to his job by a federal board Wednesday.

The U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board ordered the reinstatement of Bruce Fleming with back pay within 20 days. The English professor was removed

in August.

Administrative Judge Mark Syska wrote in the order that the primary witness in the case "had severe credibility issues." He also wrote that the purported victims in the case, who were students, "did not generally take offense or have any actual issue with the appellant."

"Moreover, much of the charged conduct, as noted by the investigating panel, did not appear to be actual misconduct in the context

of free-wheeling classroom discussions," Syska wrote.

Jason Ehrenberg, Fleming's attorney, said academy officials were trying to punish his client for criticizing the academy.

Cmdr. Alana Garas, an academy spokeswoman, said the Navy was reviewing the decision.

Fleming had been a civilian English professor at the academy since 1987.

Accusations against him included allowing students to tell

jokes of a sexual nature in class, discussing sexual matters in class, emailing partially clothed photos of himself to his students and touching students on the neck, shoulders and back in class without their consent.

Syska wrote that no one who received the photos appeared particularly offended by them, except for the primary complaining midshipman. Syska also wrote that he was "hard pressed to find misconduct" in the touch-



Bruce Fleming

ing allegations.

Syska described a complaining midshipman as being an 18-year-old who received the first C grade in his life from Fleming.

NATION

Mueller leaves last word to the voters

By LISA MASCARO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Robert Mueller's testimony sent the clearest signal yet that impeachment may be slipping out of reach for Democrats and that the ultimate verdict on President Donald Trump will be rendered by voters in the 2020 election.

Democrats had hoped the former special counsel's appearance Wednesday would be a turning point.

A Marine who served in Vietnam, Mueller is the kind of square-jawed federal prosecutor to whom Americans may have once listened as a trusted source of authority. But

ANALYSIS in this era of stark political polarization, galvanizing the public is a difficult task even if Mueller wanted to produce a viral moment, which he never seemed inclined to do. Rather than swoop in to give voice to the 448-page report, what Mueller said very few words.

What Mueller did say was striking: Trump was not exonerated of potential crimes.

His report found Russia interfered in the 2016 election in "sweeping and systematic" fashion. Accepting foreign campaign assistance is wrong, he agreed. But Mueller's reluctance to engage, and his one-word answers, deprived the country of a where-very-you-went moment that could bring decisive conclusion to the probe and Trump's role in trying to obstruct the investigation.

"It was not a hoax," Mueller testified of Russian election interference.

The result, after more than six hours at the House Judiciary and Intelligence committees, was that the sides in Washington were retrenching to their familiar outposts, leaving voters to decide what to do next.

Trump derided Mueller's appearance — "disaster," he tweeted — and started fundraising off it. The president's reelection



Former special counsel Robert Mueller testifies to the House Judiciary Committee about his investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election on Capitol Hill on Wednesday.

J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

tion campaign set a \$2 million goal over 24 hours, it said, to counter those trying to "TRICK the American People into believing their LIES."

Allies of the White House quickly joined in. GOP Sen. Lindsey Graham, of South Carolina, called Mueller's appearance "sad." Rep. Devin Nunes, of California, the top Republican on the Intelligence panel, said the hearing was the "last gasp" of the investigation.

"It's time for the curtain to close on the Russia hoax," Nunes said.

Much was riding on Mueller's appearance, coming months after the release of his report in April. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is weighing liberal calls for impeachment against her own instincts for a more measured approach investigating the Trump administration and laying out the findings.

Activists on the party's left flank have been impatient with what they see as Pelosi's slow-walking of impeachment — but they've also been deferential to her strategy. More than 85 House Democrats have called for the House to begin impeachment proceedings, and more lawmakers are expected to add their names after Mueller's testimony.

As recently as May, the FDA said that the danger did not warrant a national ban on textured devices. But the FDA said Wednesday that new data shows a direct link to cancer with Allergan's implants not seen with other textured implants.

"Once the evidence indicated that a specific manufacturer's product appeared to be directly linked to significant patient harm, including death, the FDA took action," FDA Deputy Commissioner Amy Abernethy said on a call with reporters.

The FDA said the latest figures show more than 80% of the 570 confirmed cases of the lymphoma worldwide have been linked to Allergan implants. Regulators estimate that the risk of the disease is six times higher with Allergan's implants than other textured implants sold in the U.S.

FDA officials said they decided to act after receiving 116 new reports of the cancer. Those reports increased the number of

Trump vetoes resolutions to halt arms sales to Saudis, UAE

By DEB RIECHMANN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Wednesday vetoed a trio of congressional resolutions aimed at blocking his administration from selling billions of dollars of weapons to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo last month cited threats from Iran as a reason to approve the \$8.1 billion arms sale to the two U.S. allies in the Persian Gulf.

Saudi Arabia is an enemy of Iran, and tension has mounted between the UAE and Tehran over several issues, including the UAE's coordination with U.S. efforts to curb what it calls Iran's malign activities in the region.

But Trump's decision in May to sell the weapons in a way that would have bypassed congressional review infuriated lawmakers. Democrats and Republicans banded together to pass resolutions to block the weapons sale.

The White House had argued that stopping the sale would send a signal that the United States doesn't stand by its partners and allies, particularly at a time when threats against them are increasing.

The arms package includes thousands of precision-guided munitions, other bombs and ammunition and aircraft maintenance support.

Anger has been mounting in Congress over the Trump administration's close ties to the Saudis, fueled by the high civilian casualties in the Saudi-led war in Yemen — a military campaign the U.S. is assisting — and the killing of U.S.-based columnist Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi agents.

"The president's shameful veto tramples over the will of the bipartisan, bicameral Congress and perpetuates his administration's involvement in the horrific conflict in Yemen, which is a stain on the conscience of the world," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said in a statement.

It didn't appear that lawmakers opposed to the sale had enough votes to override Trump's veto.

Sen. Bob Menendez, of New Jersey, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, led the effort, but he had support from two of Trump's GOP allies in Congress: Sens. Lindsey Graham, of South Carolina, and Rand Paul, of Kentucky.

Breast implants recalled over link to rare form of cancer

By MATTHEW PERRONE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Breast implant maker Allergan Inc. issued a worldwide recall Wednesday for certain textured models after regulators alerted the company to a heightened cancer risk with the devices.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration said it called for the removal after new information showed Allergan's Biocell breast implants with a textured surface were tied to the vast majority of cases of a rare form of lymphoma. The move follows similar action in France, Australia and Canada.

The FDA is not recommending women with the implants have them removed because the cancer is so rare, but it says they should check with their doctor if they have symptoms, which include pain and

swelling.

Biocell implants feature a textured surface designed to prevent slippage and to minimize scar tissue. Those models account for just 5 percent of the U.S. market. The vast majority of breast implants used in the U.S. have a smooth surface.

Wednesday's recall does not affect Allergan's smooth implants or a different Allergan textured implant sold under the Microcell brand.

Health authorities first linked breast implants to cancer in 2011. The disease is not breast cancer but lymphoma that grows in the scar tissue surrounding the breasts. It grows slowly and can usually be successfully treated by surgically removing the implants.

As recently as May, the FDA said that the danger did not warrant a national ban

on textured devices. But the FDA said Wednesday that new data shows a direct link to cancer with Allergan's implants not seen with other textured implants.

"Once the evidence indicated that a specific manufacturer's product appeared to be directly linked to significant patient harm, including death, the FDA took action," FDA Deputy Commissioner Amy Abernethy said on a call with reporters.

The FDA said the latest figures show more than 80% of the 570 confirmed cases of the lymphoma worldwide have been linked to Allergan implants. Regulators estimate that the risk of the disease is six times higher with Allergan's implants than other textured implants sold in the U.S.

FDA officials said they decided to act after receiving 116 new reports of the cancer. Those reports increased the number of

deaths tied to the disease from nine to 33, including at least 12 cases in women with Allergan's breast implants.

FDA's device director, Jeffrey Shuren, said the death increase played a significant role in their decision to seek a recall.

"Our team concluded action was necessary to protect the public health," he said.

The new numbers still reflect a rare disease considering an estimated 10 million women globally have breast implants. The FDA estimates that hundreds of thousands of U.S. women have the Biocell implants.

There is no firm agreement on the exact frequency of the disease, known as breast implant-associated anaplastic large cell lymphoma. Published estimates ranging from 1 in 3,000 patients to 1 in 30,000 patients.

NATION

Puerto Rican governor resigns amid protests

By DANICA COTO
Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Puerto Rican Gov. Ricardo Rossello announced his resignation overnight, ceding power after nearly two weeks of furious protests and political upheaval touched off by a leak of crude and insulting chat messages between him and his top advisers.

A crowd of thousands outside the governor's mansion in Old San Juan erupted in cheers and song after his announcement on Facebook just before midnight on Wednesday.

"Despite expecting to serve the term that the people democratically elected me to, today I feel that continuing in this position represents a threat to the success we have achieved," a shaken-looking Rossello said in an address in which he listed his accomplishments before making clear he will step down Aug. 2.

The 40-year-old Democrat and son of a governor, Rossello became the first chief executive to resign in the modern history of Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory of more than 3 million American citizens.

Justice Secretary Wanda Vazquez will assume the post more than halfway through Rossello's four-year term, becoming

ing Puerto Rico's second female governor.

"It's historic, but we have to be cautious," designer Jali Serrano said. "What will happen beyond this? There are concerns, but there is also hope."

Gesturing to the young crowd outside the mansion, he said. "This belongs to them."

Rossello's announcement — made amid threats of impeachment from lawmakers — came after a bizarre standoff unfolded in Old San Juan as the governor pledged to deliver a message to the people of Puerto Rico, then hour after hour passed in unexplained silence while thousands of protesters chanted demands for his resignation.

An announcement was first expected at 5 p.m., then finally came less than a half-hour before midnight.

At one point, dozens of officers in full riot gear marched out of the governor's mansion toward protesters.

"We want peace, and they want war!" the crowd yelled.

The obscenity-laced online messages involving the governor and 11 other men infuriated Puerto Ricans already frustrated with corruption, mismanagement, economic crisis and the sluggish recovery from Hurricane Maria nearly two years ago.

In reaction, tens of thousands took to the streets to demand Rossello's resignation in Puerto Rico's biggest demonstrations since the protests that put an end to U.S. Navy training on the island of Vieques more than 15 years ago.

The chat participants discussed the awarding of government contracts in ways that some observers called potentially illegal. They also insulted women and mocked constituents, including victims of Hurricane Maria. Rossello called a female politician a "whore," referred to another as a "daughter of a bitch" and made fun of an obese man with whom he posed in a photo.

Earlier this week, a judge issued search warrants for the cellphones of government officials involved in the chat. One of the search warrants said officials in the conversation may have illegally divulged confidential government information.

More than a dozen government officials have resigned since the chat was leaked earlier this month, including Rossello confidant and chief of staff Ricardo Llerandi, former Secretary of State Luis Rivera Marin and former chief financial officer Christen Sobrino, who also held five other positions.

Under Puerto Rico's constitu-



DENNIS M. RIVERA PICHARDO/AP

People celebrate outside the governor's mansion Thursday in San Juan, Puerto Rico, after Gov. Ricardo Rossello announced that he is resigning Aug. 2.

tion, the secretary of state would normally assume the governorship, but since that post was empty, it will go to Vazquez.

Nearly two years after Hurricane Maria hit the island, some

30,000 homes still have tarp roofs, power outages remain common and Puerto Rico has received less than a third of the roughly \$40 billion pledged by the U.S. government.

Idaho fire shifts from nuke site

Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho — The nation's primary nuclear research facility plans to go back to regular operations Thursday after a change in wind direction pushed a wildfire away from the sprawling site in Idaho.

The fire no longer poses a threat to key research facilities at the Idaho National Laboratory, lab officials said Wednesday evening.

The lightning-caused fire at the Idaho National Laboratory is one of several across the U.S. West.

Before the wind shifted, the Idaho blaze got close to several lab facilities, including one where high-level radioactive materials are studied and another holding a nuclear reactor, spokeswoman Kerry Martin said.

She said she didn't know how close the flames got to those buildings.

The lab has several safety measures for wildfires that often ignite in southeastern Idaho's des-



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT/AP

A change in wind direction Wednesday was pushing the flames from a wildfire at the Idaho National Laboratory, the nation's primary nuclear research facility, into open range, officials said.

ert rangeland, including clearing ground around each building and having several specially trained fire crews stationed around the site that's nearly the size of Rhode Island.

"It's not our first rodeo," Martin said. "We have fire stations, a lot of fire equipment; we have trained firefighters and equipment to cut barriers."

The wildfire that ignited Monday is estimated to have burned about 176 square miles. Nonsentential laboratory employees

were evacuated. Lab officials said the fire was estimated to be 60% contained Wednesday evening.

The nuclear research site includes reactors and research materials as well as facilities for processing high-level nuclear waste and other radioactive waste.

Meanwhile, rain in a forested Arizona city helped firefighters battle a wildfire that has raged for days in a scenic mountain pass but was raising the risk of flooding, officials said.

Pa. school board apologizes for threat over lunch debt

Associated Press

A Pennsylvania school district that warned parents behind on their lunch bills that their children could end up in foster care, and then rejected a businessman's offer to pay the overdue charges, is apologizing and says it wants to accept the donation after all.

The Wyoming Valley West school board "sincerely apologizes for the tone of the letter that was sent regarding lunch debt," the post on the district's website Wednesday said. "It wasn't the intention of the district to harm or inconvenience any of the families in our school district."

The board also said that it would take a donation from Todd Carmichael, chief executive of Philadelphia-based La Colombe Coffee, to pay off the \$22,000 in overdue bills, and that it would funnel the money through the district's nonprofit foundation.

"No student was ever denied a meal for lack of payment," the board wrote, adding that it followed federal and state rules. "All meals served to students were chosen by the students from our regular menu. No shaming oc-

curred and no alternate meals were provided."

Michael Plaksin, president of the Wyoming Valley West Educational Foundation, said the decision to take the donation was made during discussions he had with members of the school board.

"What is going on is that the school will be able to accept money, donations, so that we will be able to pay off the program as soon as possible," Plaksin said.

The foundation is independent of the board, he said, although they work closely together.

District officials had recently written to parents, warning they "can be sent to dependency court for neglecting your child's right to food" and that children could be removed and placed in foster care. Luzerne County child welfare authorities protested, saying they never remove children from homes over unpaid bills.

"Did people make mistakes? Of course mistakes were made," said Plaksin. "Look, if three more people had proofread the letter before it was sent out, it never would have been sent out. It was that simple."

NATION

Judge blocks Trump's asylum restrictions

Policy barred entry after transit through another country to US

By AMY TAXIN
AND ASHRAF KHALIL
Associated Press

A federal judge on Wednesday ordered the Trump administration to stop denying asylum to anyone who transits through another country to reach the U.S. border, marking the latest legal defeat for a president waging an all-out battle to stem the flow of migrants entering from Mexico.

The ruling by U.S. District Judge Jon Tigar in San Francisco came hours after another federal judge in Washington, D.C., let the 9-day-old policy stand. The California judge's preliminary injunction halts the policy while the lawsuit plays out in court.

The new policy denies asylum to anyone who passes through another country on the way to the U.S. without seeking protection there. Most crossing the Mexican border are from Central America, but it would apply to all nationalities except countries that border the U.S.

The dramatic change went into effect last week, though there were conflicting reports on whether U.S. immigration agencies were enforcing it.

Top U.S. officials said the policy would discourage migrants from leaving their countries, which they say is necessary to reduce the number of people that U.S. authorities are detaining.

Tigar, who was appointed by former President Barack Obama, halted another Trump policy last year to deny asylum to people who crossed the border illegally.

The judge said the policy could expose migrants to violence and abuse, deny their rights under international law and return them to countries they were fleeing. He cited the administration's own court filings to argue that Mexico was unsafe.

Tigar acknowledged that the U.S. immigration system is overwhelmed by the surge in migrants from Central America over the

last year. "But shortcutting the law, or weakening the boundary between Congress and the Executive, are not the solutions to these problems," he wrote.

The Justice and Homeland Security Departments did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

President Donald Trump told reporters before his departure for a fundraiser in West Virginia that the decision earlier Wednesday by U.S. District Judge Timothy Kelly, a Trump appointee, was a "tremendous ruling." He added: "We appreciate it. We respect the courts very much. That helps us very much at the border."

The California judge ruled in favor of advocacy groups represented by the American Civil Liberties Union, Southern Poverty Law Center and Center for Constitutional Rights.

Melissa Crow, an attorney for the Southern Poverty Law Center, said the decision was "an important victory for incredibly vulnerable individuals and families from besieged Central American countries seeking refuge in our country."

"We will continue to fight this draconian policy as well as the myriad of others through which the Trump administration continues to wage war on asylum-seekers and our nation's asylum system," Crow said.

The policy would have limited exceptions that would allow for asylum: if someone has been trafficked, if an asylum-seeker sought protection in a country but was denied or if the country the migrant passed through did not sign one of the major international treaties that govern how refugees are managed.

The decision came as tens of thousands of people are waiting in Mexico on official and unofficial lists formed after U.S. agents started turning away many asylum-seekers, citing lack of space and delays in immigration court.

Trump, DHS leader at odds over Guatemala on immigration

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump spent a second day railing against Guatemala and threatening retaliation even as the acting head of the Department of Homeland Security praised the Central American nation for what he said was cooperation to tighten immigration security.

Speaking to reporters Wednesday at the White House, Trump accused Guatemala of breaking a deal to enter into a "safe third country" agreement — even though the country's government has said it never agreed to

the arrangement — and accused its leaders of using a high-court ruling that blocked the move as a convenient excuse.

"So Guatemala gave us their word. We were going to sign a safe third agreement and then all of a sudden they backed up," complained Trump. "They said it was their Supreme Court. I don't believe that, but they used their Supreme Court as the reason they didn't want to do it."

A "safe-third agreement" would require migrants, including Salvadorans and Hondurans, who cross into Guatemala on



MARCO UGARTE/AP

Migrants wait outside at an immigration center last week to be bused from Nuevo Laredo to Monterrey, Mexico. The migrants were knowing the dangers that lurk in Tamaulipas, including organized crime groups known to extort, kidnap and kill people like them.

Asylum-seekers are dumped in dangerous area of Mexico

Associated Press

MONTERREY, Mexico — The bus carrying dozens of Central Americans from the Texas border arrived in this northern Mexican city late at night and pulled up next to the station. Men and women disembarked with children in their arms or staggering sleepily by their sides, looked around fearfully and wondered what to do.

They had thought they were being taken to a shelter where they could live, look for work and go to school. Instead they found themselves in a bustling metropolis of over 4 million, dropped off on a street across from sleazy nightclubs and cabarets with signs advertising for "dancers."

The Associated Press witnessed several such busloads in recent days carrying at least 450

Hondurans, Guatemalans and Salvadorans from Nuevo Laredo, across from Laredo, Texas, to Monterrey, where they are left to fend for themselves with no support on housing, work or schooling for children, who appear to make up about half the group.

Mexico has received some 20,000 asylum-seekers returned to await U.S. immigration court dates under the program colloquially known as "remain in Mexico." But there had been no sign of such large-scale moving of people away from the border before now, after the program expanded to Nuevo Laredo in violence- and cartel-plagued Tamaulipas, a state where the U.S. State Department warns against all travel due to kidnappings and other crime.

The migrants were not forced to make the journey but said they

didn't see any other option. They know the dangers in Tamaulipas, where organized crime groups have been known to extort, kidnap and kill people like them.

In response to a request for comment, the National Immigration Institute, or INM for its initials in Spanish, said in a two-paragraph statement that the agency cooperates with consular authorities and all levels of government to attend to returnees. It said Mexico abides by international law and is working to upgrade shelters and immigration facilities "to improve the conditions in which migrants await their processes in national territory."

Maximiliano Reyes, INM deputy foreign relations secretary, acknowledged last week that migrants were being removed from Nuevo Laredo and said it was for their own safety.

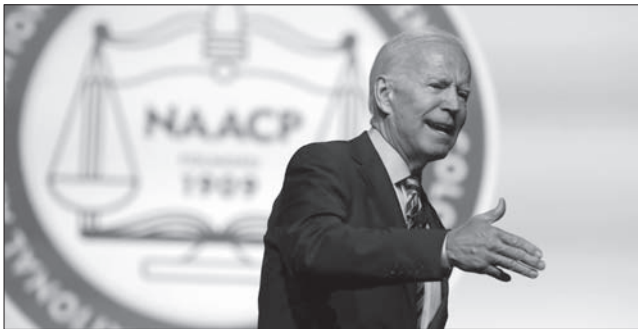
Trump and his DHS leaders didn't see any other option. They know the dangers in Tamaulipas, where organized crime groups have been known to extort, kidnap and kill people like them.

Trump and his DHS leaders didn't see any other option. They know the dangers in Tamaulipas, where organized crime groups have been known to extort, kidnap and kill people like them.

Trump and his DHS leaders didn't see any other option. They know the dangers in Tamaulipas, where organized crime groups have been known to extort, kidnap and kill people like them.

Neilsen, too, tried to highlight the cooperation between governments, even as Trump complained about them.

NATION



CARLOS OSORIO/AP

Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden told the 110th NAACP National Convention on Wednesday in Detroit that he is not using his relationship with former President Barack Obama as a political “crutch” in his 2020 White House bid. Biden served as Obama’s vice president for eight years.

Biden says he’s not relying on Obama as ‘crutch’ in bid

Associated Press

DETROIT — Joe Biden rarely lets a public event pass without reminding voters of his work alongside President Barack Obama. But the former vice president insisted Wednesday that he’s not overly relying on that relationship to fuel his 2020 White House bid. “It’s not a crutch,” Biden said during a forum in Detroit sponsored by the NAACP. “You can ask President Obama. I don’t need any crutch.”

The comment reflects the challenge facing Biden as he tries to protect his fragile status as the early Democratic front-runner. His frequent invocation of the Obama years could appeal to Democrats, particularly blacks, who hold the former president in high regard. But presidential candidates are rarely successful if they’re viewed as simply the next chapter of a prior administration.

Pete Buttigieg, 37, the mayor of South Bend, Ind., has made generational change a centerpiece of his presidential candidacy. Without naming Biden, he called on the audience to embrace change and resist the urge to return to the days before President Donald Trump.

“We will not and cannot win if our message as a Democratic Party is ‘We’re just going to go back to normal,’” Buttigieg said.

Biden, 76, insisted his candidacy is not a “continuation of Barack and our administration,” noting “new problems” must be addressed today.

“But the fact of the matter is he’s a close friend,” Biden said of Obama. “I’m proud to have served with him.”

Biden is at the top of most polls in no small part because of support from black voters who are crucial to winning the Democratic primary. The audience applauded Biden at the NAACP event, but his past handling of racial issues have come under scrutiny in recent weeks.

He sparked a firestorm with comments last month touting his work alongside segregationist lawmakers when he was elected to the Senate in the 1970s.

During the first presidential debate, California Sen. Kamala Harris slammed Biden’s remarks and highlighted in personal terms his previous opposition to busing. Sen. and New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker, who also criticized Biden’s segregationist comment, will share the stage with Biden at next week’s debate and could revive their line of attack.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson, who, like Biden, ran for president in 1988, said Wednesday that the former vice president has “some obligation” to address his past ac-

tions, including his work on the 1994 crime bill. That legislation has been blamed for the mass incarceration of racial minorities over the past two decades.

Biden acknowledged he and Jackson “disagree a little bit” on the law. Biden said that when the legislation was passed, “we had a gigantic epidemic in America of violence, particularly in African American communities.” He blamed the Republican takeover of Congress during the 1990s for blocking reforms to the law.

Biden released a criminal justice proposal on Tuesday that would reverse several key provisions of the 1994 law. Among other things, he called for an end to the disparity that placed stricter sentencing terms on offenses involving crack versus powder cocaine as well as an end to the federal death penalty, which the legislation authorized as a potential punishment for an increasing number of crimes.

Even as Biden said he wasn’t using Obama as a “crutch,” he returned to the former president to challenge arguments that he has a problem on race.

“I doubt he would have picked me” as vice president “if these accusations about being wrong on civil rights are correct,” Biden said.

US will execute inmates for 1st time since 2003

By MICHAEL BALSAMO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department said Thursday that it will carry out executions of federal death row inmates for the first time since 2003.

Five inmates who have been sentenced to death are scheduled to be executed starting in December.

In 2014, following a botched state execution in Oklahoma, then-President Barack Obama directed the department to conduct a broad review of capital punishment and issues surrounding lethal injection drugs. It remains unclear today what came of that review and whether it will change the way the federal government carries out executions.

That review has been completed, and the executions can continue, the department said.

Executions on the federal level have been rare. The government has put to death only three defendants since restoring the federal death penalty in 1988, the most recent of which occurred in 2003, when Louis Jones was executed for the 1995 kidnapping, rape and murder of a young female soldier.

“Congress has expressly authorized the death penalty through legislation adopted by the people’s representatives in both houses of Congress and signed by the President,” Attorney General William Barr said in a news release. “The Justice Department upholds the rule of law — and we owe it to the victims and their families to carry forward the sentence imposed by our justice system.”

Capital punishment has emerged as a flashpoint in the Democratic presidential primary, with former Vice President Joe Biden this week shifting to call for the elimination of the federal death penalty after years of supporting it. Biden’s criminal justice plan also would encourage states to follow the federal government in ending the death penalty, 25 years after he helped pass a tough crime bill that expanded capital punishment for more potential offenses.

The lone Democratic White House hopeful who has publicly supported preserving capital punishment in certain circumstances is Montana Gov. Steve Bullock, who has said he would leave it open as an option for major crimes such as terrorism.



AP

The U.S. Penitentiary in Terre Haute, Ind., is the site of the last federal execution, in 2003. The Justice Department says executions of federal death row inmates will resume starting in December.



NEW YORK STATE
SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY/AP

Jeffrey Epstein, in jail awaiting trial on sex trafficking charges, was reportedly found injured in his cell.

AP source: Epstein found injured in NYC jail cell

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Wealthy financier Jeffrey Epstein was found on the floor of his jail cell with bruises on his neck early this week while awaiting trial on sex trafficking charges, a person familiar with the matter said Thursday.

It was not clear whether the injuries were self-inflicted or from an assault, said the person, who

was not authorized to discuss the case and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Epstein, 66, was treated and remains in custody at the federal Metropolitan Correctional Center in New York City. Jail records obtained by the AP show no indication he was taken to a hospital.

There was no immediate response from jail officials and one of Epstein’s lawyers.

It was not clear whether Epstein had any cellmates. The jail is famous for its tight security and high-profile inmates, who have included terrorists and, until recently, Mexican drug lord Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán.

Epstein has been accused of sexually abusing dozens of underage girls in the early 2000s. A judge denied him bail last week, ruling that he might flee the coun-

try if released. The judge also said Epstein is a danger to the public because of his “uncontrollable” urges to engage in sexual conduct with underage girls.

Jail officials would have had no reason to place Epstein under heightened supervision unless he seemed suicidal when he arrived, said Cameron Lindsay, a retired warden who ran three federal lockups.

WIRED WORLD

Game on

All-girls school in Ohio becomes 1st in US with varsity esports

By JAKE SEINER
Associated Press

As a liaison at the U.S. Department of Education, J Collins watched as colleges by the dozen rolled out varsity esports programs, complete with scholarships, coaches and even some arenas. Collins had a gnawing concern: Gaming was beginning to have an impact on education and, at least anecdotally, the benefits were going largely toward male students.

Now, Collins is on the ground attempting to solve a puzzle that's perplexed an industry approaching \$1 billion revenues — where are all the female gamers?

Collins helped a private school near Cleveland become the first U.S. all-girls school to launch a varsity esports program during last school year. With Collins as coach, the 10-person team at Hathaway Brown competed against local schools and libraries, with players ranging from novices to avid gamers.

The players reported many of the benefits associated with traditional sports — bonding, teamwork and improved confidence among them — and some say they might pursue college scholarships. Collins hopes the program can set an example for how high schools can attract more female and gender minority gamers so they can take advantage of expanding opportunities at the university level.

Collins has a background in game-based education and was the first to broach the topic of esports at the Department of Education late in President Barack Obama's final term. Football became a go-to analogy — the sport has affected high school and college education in major ways, with resources poured into aiding its almost exclusively male

participants.

Esports has already begun to spread in similar fashion. More than 100 colleges have varsity esports programs, and more are joining each year, with many smaller schools using teams as recruiting tools. That expansion could open doors for students of all genders, especially since video games don't have the same physical barriers as most traditional sports.

"There was an imperative for us to be involved with it from an early outset, so that we could ensure there was equity across implementations," Collins said.

Collins found that collegiate esports teams were struggling to find nonmale players. The same complaint kept coming up: Girls and women aren't in esports because they don't play video games.

That didn't jive with the data, which shows that 45% of gamers in the U.S. are female.

"It got us thinking, maybe the problem isn't that there aren't girl gamers and gender minority gamers," Collins said. "Maybe the problem is that they're in different places than the esports teams are looking."

Collins suspects the trajectory for girls in gaming is similar to that of girls and gender minorities in STEM. Research shows many girls shy away from science, technology, engineering and math tracks around middle school due to "lack of role models, toxic culture and generally feeling like they don't fit in in that world," Collins said.

League of Legends, the world's most popular esports, fits a similar description. There are no women in its highest professional circuit, and its largely male player base has been criticized for its toxic reputation.



Above: Claire Hofstra, foreground, and Kaila Morris play *Heroes of the Storm* at Hathaway Brown School in Shaker Heights, Ohio. Hathaway Brown launched the country's first varsity esports program at an all-girls school.

Left: Coach J Collins, seen with Morris, hopes to encourage more girls to stick with video games through their teenage years, something that might have a ripple effect across an industry grappling with gender disparity.

PHOTOS BY TONY DEJAK/AP



After leaving the Department of Education to teach at Hathaway Brown last fall, Collins polled students, who reported enthusiastically playing games like *Super Smash Bros.*, a fighting game from Nintendo, and *Just Dance*, a motion-based dance game. Hardly any were interested in *League of Legends*.

"That got me thinking that maybe it wasn't just the structure of some of these things," Collins said. "Maybe it was the game selection."

Collins helped organize a league comprising 10 schools and libraries from varying backgrounds, including rural, urban, underserved and all-girls. In order to attract a wider selection of students, a panel selected three games for the first year of the league. It settled on a sports game (*Rocket League*), a digital card game (*Hearthstone*), and a multiplayer online battle arena game (*Heroes of the Storm*) — not the games requested by female students, necessarily, but none with reputations similar to *League of Legends*, either.

Ninth grader Claire Hofstra was among the most enthusiastic respondents, and Collins asked her to find four other freshmen to fill out a *Heroes of the Storm* squad. Even though the game is similar in playstyle to *League of Legends* — the kind of thing girls supposedly don't like — the ninth graders enjoyed it so much they continued to get together and play even when the season ended.

The benefits for the girls were plenty. Julianna Reineks was in her first year at HB and lives an hour away from the school, and the esports team helped her make friends. Kaila Morris, another freshman who described herself as "pretty shy," found her voice as a broadcaster during the league's championship matches.

And Hofstra — an avid gamer before joining the HB team — overcame the peer pressure she

felt at her previous public school to give up gaming.

"This helped me stick with it," she said. "I definitely felt the pressure, just because I'm a girl, people don't really take you seriously."

All three students who spoke to The Associated Press plan to return to the esports team next season, and they're hoping the league will adopt games even better targeted to them and their friends — *Super Smash Bros* and *Splatoon* are the big ones. They're still a few years off from making college decisions, but all three also said they'd consider playing collegiate esports, especially if a scholarship is involved.

It's a small but encouraging step to Collins, who is transgender and has felt alternately better connected and more isolated from people in their own life because of video games.

Perhaps the most heartwarming takeaway from the first-year esports league for Collins was that the loudest complaint from students was they didn't get enough interaction with kids from other schools.

"I was stunned," Collins said. "That's pretty incredible."

"Games can bring people together. They can just sit down and start playing together. That's a beautiful thing. We need to make sure that the systems that we have in place encourage that instead of discourage that."



Morris, left, and Hofstra plan out a strategy for the computer game *Heroes of the Storm* at Hathaway Brown School earlier this month.

WORLD

Europe bakes amid record-breaking heat

Associated Press

PARIS — Temperature records that had stood for decades fell minute by minute Thursday afternoon and Europeans threw themselves into fountains, lakes, rivers or the sea to escape a suffocating heat wave rising up from the Sahara.

Two potential drug dealers in Belgium even called the police, begging to be rescued from the locked container they managed to get themselves trapped in.

It was nearly impossible to keep up with the falling records as temperatures climbed higher and higher under a brutal sun — in Paris, Belgium, London, Germany, the Netherlands — all places where air conditioning is not typically installed in homes, cafes or stores. Even office air-conditioning systems strained under the hot, dry weather that was trapped between two stormy weather systems.

Electric fans sold out across Paris — and traditional folding fans made a comeback on the city's stuffy Metro. Still, the atmosphere was buoyant, as people sought to stay cool yet embrace the heat blast from the south.

France's heat alert system went to its maximum level of red for the first time during last month's heat wave, when France saw its highest-ever recorded temperature of 114.8 degrees Fahrenheit. On Thursday, about one-fifth of French territory was under a red alert, stretching from the English Channel through the Paris region

and down to Burgundy and affecting at least 20 million people.

Trains were canceled in Britain and France, and French authorities urged travelers to stay home. Messages to "Hydrate yourselves!" blared from the radio, TV and public message boards.

Across the Channel, the heat damaged overhead electric wires between London's St. Pancras station and Luton airport, blocking all train lines. East Midlands Trains posted a message to passengers on Twitter, saying simply "DO NOT TRAVEL."

The sheer levels of heat on Thursday afternoon were nothing short of astonishing.

The Paris area hit 108.7 degrees, beating the previous record of 104.7 set in 1947.

The Netherlands' meteorologi-

cal institute announced a record that beat the previous record set just a day ago: 104.7 Thursday in the municipality of Gilze Rijen, near the border with Belgium.

In Belgium, the new all-time high rose to 105.1 in Kline Brogel. "This is the highest recorded temperature for Belgium in history since the beginning of the measurements in 1833," said Alex Dewalque of the country's Royal Meteorological Institute.

In the northern German town of Lingen, a new national record temperature of 107.6 was set in the afternoon. It was not clear how long that record would last. A day earlier, Germany had also set a record of 104.9 in Geilenkirchen near the Belgian border.

London recorded its hottest day on record for July, with the mer-

cury climbing to 98.4 at Heathrow Airport. The previous July record was 98 in 2015.

The Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment issued a "smog alarm" Thursday for areas including the densely populated cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague due to high ozone levels.

In Germany, Switzerland and Austria, some communities painted vital rail tracks white in hopes the light color would bring down the temperature by a few degrees and the tracks would not get warped by the heat.

German railways Deutsche Bahn said passengers who had booked tickets for Thursday or Friday and wanted to delay their trips could do so without charge.



KIRSTY WIGGLESWORTH/AP

England's Jack Leach cools down during the second day of the cricket test match between England and Ireland in London on Thursday. Forecasters expected U.K. temperatures to top 100 by the end of Thursday.

Inventor fails to fly across waterway

Associated Press

SANGATTE, France — A French aviation buff and inventor failed Thursday in his attempt to cross the English Channel on a homemade "flying board."

After careful preparations, Franky Zapata took off from the French coastal town of Sangatte fastened to the small flying platform he designed. From afar, it looked like he was skateboarding on the sky.

But as he descended for a refueling stop about halfway through, he encountered a "problem," said spokeswoman Anna Venekas.

She said "the flight is canceled" and that Zapata "is doing fine." She would not give further details.

CNews television cited people close to Zapata as saying his journey was cut short when he hit the refueling boat and fell in the water.

He hoped to make it across 22.4 miles to the Dover area in southeast England in about 20 minutes. He was carrying a power pack full of kerosene, and was planning to refuel from a boat part-way across.


EDELWEISS
 LODGE and RESORT
 A vacation you will cherish forever!
 Download the FREE winter vacation guide
 at EdelweissLodgeandResort.com

Garmisch, Germany

Oh! The Places You'll See with

STARS AND STRIPES®



Visit before you go!

[Stripes.com/travel](https://www.strips.com/travel) [Japan.Stripes.com](https://www.strips.com/japan)
[Europe.Stripes.com](https://www.strips.com/europe) [Korea.Stripes.com](https://www.strips.com/korea)
[Guam.Stripes.com](https://www.strips.com/guam) [Okinawa.Stripes.com](https://www.strips.com/okinawa)



WORLD



JEROME DELAY/AP

A child is vaccinated against Ebola earlier this month in Beni, Congo. Despite the availability of a more effective vaccine, Ebola is spreading due to distrust, violence and political instability in the region.

Ebola vaccine's promise in Congo is undermined by deep distrust

Associated Press

BENI, Congo — Until his last breath, Salomon Nduhi Kambale insisted he had been poisoned by someone and that was the reason he was vomiting blood. The 30-year-old man wouldn't give community health teams his phone number, and when they found it he hung up on them.

Health workers were desperate to persuade him to get vaccinated for Ebola after a friend fell ill with the lethal and highly contagious disease.

But within days, Nduhi was dead. His widow and their four young children were given his positive Ebola test result and a chilling warning from a team of health workers: "If you don't accept vaccination, you can prepare to die."

Deep distrust — along with political instability and deadly violence — has severely undermined

efforts by public health authorities in Congo to curb the outbreak by tracing and vaccinating those who may have come into contact with infected people.

Health experts agree the experimental Ebola vaccine has saved multitudes in Congo. But after nearly a year and some 171,000 doses given, the epidemic shows few signs of waning.

The virus has killed more than 1,700 people and has now arrived in the region's largest city, Goma. The World Health Organization last week declared the outbreak a global health emergency.

During the 2014-16 Ebola epidemic in West Africa, which left more than 11,300 people dead, health workers could only dream of a vaccine with a 97.5% effectiveness rate that could improve the odds of survival even in those already infected.

"We have it now and it's not the

miracle we wanted it to be," said Dr. Joanne Liu, president of Doctors Without Borders. "The fact that we've used so much vaccine and the epidemic hasn't stopped, that shows us that contact tracing is not great."

The WHO says as many as 90% of those eligible for vaccination have accepted it, but that figure only includes those who gave contact tracers enough information to be included on a list. The success rate excludes those who distrusted health workers and fled, or those who couldn't be found in the first place.

Health workers have been using what is known as a ring vaccination strategy, in which the vaccine is first given to those who were in close contact with a sick person. Then a second so-called ring is created by giving the vaccine to those who were in contact with those people.

UK PM Johnson says full steam ahead for Brexit

By JILL LAWLESS
AND DANICA KIRKA
Associated Press

LONDON — Boris Johnson held his first Cabinet meeting as Britain's prime minister on Thursday, pledging to break the Brexit impasse that brought down predecessor Theresa May.

Johnson told his just-assembled top team in 10 Downing St. that Britain was at "a pivotal moment in our country's history." He repeated his vow that the U.K. would leave the European Union "on Oct. 31 or indeed earlier."

He will face a rowdier reception later when he addresses the House of Commons for the first time as the country's leader.

Johnson has less than 100 days to make good on his promise to deliver Brexit by Oct. 31 after what he called "three years of unfounded self-doubt" under May's government.

In his first speech as prime minister on Wednesday, Johnson offered a scattergun plethora of promises, from more police on the streets to ending a ban on genetically modified crops to faster internet access.

But his main task is making good on his vow that the U.K. will leave the EU at the end of October, "come what may."

To accomplish it, he culled many members of May's Cabinet within hours of taking office, replacing them with a group of loyal Brexit supporters.

The new lineup includes Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, Treasury chief Sajid Javid, Home Secretary Priti Patel and

House of Commons leader Jacob Rees-Mogg.

Many of the new ministers worked with Johnson in the 2016 referendum campaign to leave the EU, as did much of Johnson's new backroom staff.

Three years after the "leave" campaign won that referendum by 52-48%, Britain remains in the 28-nation bloc.

Brexiters blame May, who resigned in defeat after failing three times to secure Parliament's backing for her divorce deal with the bloc.

Her allies point out that it was hard-core Brexit supporters who sank the deal because they felt it kept the U.K. too closely bound to the EU's rules.

Johnson, who won an election of Conservative members to replace May as party leader and prime minister, has vowed to complete Brexit and silence "the doubters, the doomsters, the gloomsters" who believe it can't be done.

But the brass Brexit advocate faces the same problems that May faced: heading a government without a parliamentary majority and with most lawmakers opposed to leaving the EU without a divorce deal.

The EU is adamant it will not renegotiate the agreement struck with May on the terms of Britain's departure and the framework of future relations. Without it, Britain faces a chaotic Brexit that economists warn would disrupt trade by imposing tariffs and customs checks between Britain and the bloc, send the value of the pound plummeting and plunge the U.K. into recession.

Female suicide bomber targeted UN envoy

Associated Press

MOGADISHU, Somalia — A rare female suicide bomber used in the deadly al-Shabab attack in the office of Mogadishu's mayor was aiming for the American who is the new United Nations envoy to Somalia and had left the office just minutes earlier, the extremist group and officials said.

The death toll in Wednesday's attack rose to seven and the seriously wounded Mayor Abdirahman Omar Osman was in a coma on Thursday. He and other officials were expected to be airlifted to Qatar for treatment, said Mohamed Ahmed, a government official at the Mogadishu hospital treating the mayor.

The new U.N. envoy, James

Swan, was the bomber's intended target, Abdiqaziz Abu Musab, al-Shabab's military spokesman, told local media.

Capt. Mohamed Hussein, a senior police officer, said the female bomber walked into a security meeting and blew herself up a few yards away from the mayor. It was just the fourth time the al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab had been known to use a female bomber in a suicide attack.

Swan had paid the Somali capital's mayor a brief visit and left the compound less than an hour before the bombing, an official at the mayor's office told The Associated Press.

In a statement, Swan condemned "this heinous attack

which not only demonstrates a violent disregard for the sanctity of human life, but also targets Somalis working to improve the lives of their fellow Somalis." U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also condemned the attack.

It was not clear how the bomber managed to enter the mayor's office as visitors are required to pass through at least four metal detectors.

Some security officials said the attacker might have coordinated with corrupt officials, offering them bribes for access.

Al-Shabab often targets government buildings such as the presidential palace and other high-profile parts of Mogadishu with bombings.



Your Tax Professionals in Northern Italy

Vicenza -
On base year round service
Bldg 305
Tel: 0444-303-327
Cell: 331-434-2054
email: Alice.Oblak-Hulse@hrblock.com

Aviano
Cell: 334-998-5159

H&R
BLOCK

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Fair's butter sculpture honors moon landing

OH COLUMBUS — Gov. Mike DeWine on Wednesday opened the 166th edition of the Ohio State Fair, which this year is commemorating the 50th anniversary of the moon landing with a life-size butter sculpture.

This year's annual butter display features a life-size sculpture of Wapakoneta native Neil Armstrong saluting the American flag after planting it on the moon's surface as he stands beside the lunar module.

The sculpture also includes the Apollo 11 emblem and life-size sculptures of Armstrong and fellow astronauts Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins sitting beside the traditional butter cow and calf.

Police wait downstream for fleeing suspect

NC LAKE LURE — A wanted Tiki bar cook tried to flee authorities by swimming away in a North Carolina river but was caught by officers waiting downstream.

A Lake Lure Police statement said Jesse Lee Boyd, 38, was wanted by the U.S. Marshals Service on warrants accusing him of forgery or counterfeiting in Iowa.

Investigators said they made a plan over the weekend to arrest him at the management office of the Geneva Riverside Tiki Bar. But they say Boyd was warned as he walked to the office and fled on foot before dashing into the Rocky Broad River.

Officers positioned themselves downstream along the banks, and Boyd eventually gave himself up.

Uber driver carries sisters 200 miles

MN MINNEAPOLIS — An Uber driver ferried two sisters 200 miles to their aunt's 100th birthday party in Minnesota.

Kerry Maggard and Deb Eggers were flying from San Antonio to Sioux Falls, S.D., with a connecting flight in Minneapolis. But bad weather forced their flight from San Antonio to land in Madison, Wis., and they missed their connecting flight in Minneapolis. No other flights were available.

So the sisters turned to Uber. Jesus Florentino didn't realize the length of the trip when he pulled up, but agreed to drive.

Uber charged Maggard \$216 for the trip. She tipped Florentino another \$54.

Girl tossed in air after prison charges tourists

WY YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — Yellowstone National Park officials said a bull bison tossed a 9-year-old girl into the air when the animal charged a group of about 50 tourists.

Park officials said the bison rushed the group Monday after some of the tourists approached to within 5 to 10 feet of the animal over at least 20 minutes.

The Odessa, Fla., girl was taken



ELIAS FUNEZ, THE (GRASS VALLEY, CALIF.) UNION/AP

Record-breaking breaks

Kirby DeLaunay breaks through a stack of bricks Tuesday at the California State Fair in Sacramento, Calif. On a stage she had dreamed of performing on since she was a kid, the highly decorated martial artist smashed through a world-record 280 bricks in 2 minutes, 41 seconds.

to Old Faithful Lodge by her family for treatment by emergency personnel. She was later taken to a clinic and released.

Camper arrested with LSD-laced dog biscuits

AR HOT SPRINGS — A 25-year-old Louisiana man was arrested in western Arkansas after he was allegedly found with psychedelic mushrooms, LSD-laced dog biscuits and a variety of other drugs.

The Sentinel-Records reported Quincy Edward Boudreaux, of Monroe, La., was arrested on multiple felony counts at Lake Ouachita State Park, about 70 miles west of Little Rock.

Two other men were arrested on misdemeanor drug counts.

1K gallons of syrup spill near French Quarter

LA NEW ORLEANS — Crews spent a night cleaning syrup from one block of a four-lane street along New Orleans' French Quarter.

Police said a container truck spilled about 1,000 gallons of syrup Monday evening after a rubber shipping bladder broke.

Both eastbound lanes of Rampart Street reopened the next day and police tweeted a #SYR-

THE CENSUS

17K

The number of oysters someone stole from a Florida seafood company. Pensacola Bay Oyster Co. posted photos on Instagram of more than 35 empty bags that were tossed into a wooded area along the beach in East Bay. They're offering a reward for information that leads to the arrest and conviction of those involved in the theft.

UPDATE that began "We're not waffling."

Police said the trucker was cited for improper loading and size and weight limit violations.

Heavy church bell stolen from demolition site

CT WATERBURY — A roughly 300-pound bronze church bell and a pile of scrap metal were reported stolen from the site of a Russian Orthodox Church slated for demolition in Connecticut.

Project manager Albert Well told the Republican-American that scrap metal and the lightest of three bronze bells that once hung in Nativity of the Holy Virgin Mary Russian Orthodox Church in Waterbury were stolen in late June.

Well estimated the bell is worth thousands as an artifact. Police estimate the bronze and the stolen scrap metal is worth \$500.

Bear that broke into home euthanized

VT UNDERHILL — The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department reminded people to avoid attracting bears after a bear that broke into a home in Underhill recently had to be euthanized due to public safety concerns.

Officials said the bear twice entered the home at night through screened windows. It ransacked the kitchen, opened the refrigerator and ate cheese, grapes, maple syrup and bread.

Chief Game Warden Colonel Jason Batchelder said a bear that learns to get food from human sources will quickly lose its fear of people and become "a potential threat to human safety."

Fans turn out to see steam engine Big Boy

WI ALTOONA — Train fans are turning out in

Altoona to see the world's largest operating steam locomotive.

The 133-foot-long Big Boy No. 4014 is part of Union Pacific's tour to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the transcontinental railroad.

The restored engine is the only operating Big Boy locomotive of the 25 built.

31 charged in scheme to smuggle cigarettes

NC RALEIGH — Federal prosecutors charged 31 people with running an operation to smuggle cigarettes from North Carolina and sell them in the New York area to avoid taxes.

A news release said that the smugglers would buy thousands of cigarettes from businesses in Fayetteville, then pack them in vans or trucks and drive to New York after stopping in Virginia.

Raleigh-based U.S. Attorney Robert Higon told reporters that the ring could make more than \$50 in profit per carton because of the difference in sales taxes and retail prices for cigarettes in North Carolina and New York.

Authorities said the scheme netted at least \$12 million in illicit profits.

From wire reports

Welcome to the Neighborhood.



You rely on your
military community
when you're far from
home.

We get that.

USE OUR COMMUNITY SITES TO CONNECT AND SHARE DURING
YOUR TIME OVERSEAS.

WITH BASE INFORMATION, TRAVEL TIPS, RESTAURANT REVIEWS
AND EVEN THE SCORE OF YOUR CHILD'S HIGH SCHOOL
BASKETBALL GAME, WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED.

VISIT ONE OF OUR
COMMUNITY SITES TODAY!

STARS AND STRIPES. **KOREA**

STARS AND STRIPES. **GUAM**

STARS AND STRIPES. **OKINAWA**

STARS AND STRIPES. **JAPAN**

STARS AND STRIPES. **EUROPE**

Stay connected and hey, welcome to the neighborhood.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Chipotle: Fake meat is 'too processed'

Bloomberg

Restaurants are lining up to put meat substitutes from Beyond Meat Inc. and Impossible Foods Inc. on their menus, but don't expect Chipotle Mexican Grill Inc. to join them.

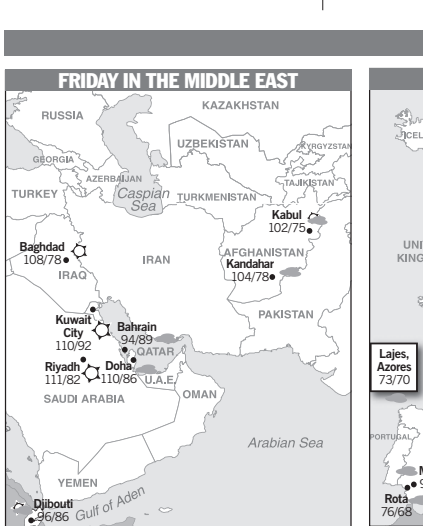
Chief Executive Officer Brian Niccol said the companies' products are too processed for the burrito chain, which touts its simple food and a menu that uses only 51 ingredients.

"We have spoken to those folks and, unfortunately, it wouldn't fit in our 'food with integrity' principles because of the processing, as I understand it, that it takes to make a plant taste like a burger," Niccol said. "If there's a way for them to do this that would match our 'food with integrity' principles, I'm sure we would continue talking with them."

Chipotle is doing all of its culinary development of new products internally, he added.

In response, Beyond Meat CEO Ethan Brown invited Chipotle to visit its factory in Columbia, Mo., and suggested that meat producers are worse.

EUROPE GAS PRICES				
Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Germany	\$3.016	\$3.382	\$3.634	\$3.310
Change in price	-2.9 cents	-2.1 cents	-2.4 cents	-0.7 cents
Netherlands	---	\$3.932	\$4.140	\$3.979
Change in price	---	-1.2 cents	-1.3 cents	-1.2 cents
U.K.	---	\$3.316	\$3.568	\$3.244
Change in price	---	-2.1 cents	-2.4 cents	-0.7 cents
Azores	---	---	\$3.555	---
Change in price	---	---	-2.4 cents	---
Belgium	---	\$2.878	\$2.991	\$3.107
Change in price	---	No change	No change	No change
Turkey	---	---	\$3.451	\$3.127*
Change in price	---	---	-2.4 cents	-0.7 cents



CEO says Boeing may temporarily halt production of 737 Max plane

Associated Press

DALLAS — Boeing's CEO says the company will consider temporarily shutting down production of the 737 Max if the plane's return is significantly delayed beyond the company's October forecast.

The comment by Chairman and CEO Dennis Muilenburg underscores the uncertainty swirling around the company and its best-selling plane, which has been grounded since March after two deadly crashes.

Boeing reported Wednesday that it suffered its biggest quarterly loss in at least two decades, nearly \$3 billion, as it absorbed financial damage caused by the Max. Revenue plunged 35% after Boeing halted deliveries of any new Max jets.

The huge second-quarter loss was expected. Boeing received much of the suspense from earnings day when it announced last week that it would take a \$4.9 billion after-tax charge for the Max.

The charge was calculated from Boeing's estimate of the cost of compensating airlines for lost use of their Max planes for several months. It did not include Boeing's potential liability from dozens of lawsuits filed by rela-

tives of the 346 passengers who died in the two crashes.

Boeing is updating U.S. and foreign regulators daily on its work to fix the plane. Based on those discussions, the company said last week that it expects the Max to resume flying early in the fourth quarter.

The Max assembly line near Seattle has stayed open, although at a reduced rate. The company even hopes to boost production gradually from the current 42 a month to 57 a month next year, but that assumes the plane will fly and Boeing will soon resume deliveries to airlines — jets have been piling up in Boeing lots since March.

Muilenburg's comments implied that the Federal Aviation Administration can review the company's changes to flight control software in one month. The FAA has already been analyzing much of Boeing's work. An FAA spokesman said the agency has no preconceived timeline for returning the Max to service, and will do so only when it determines that the plane is safe.

The grounding of Boeing's plane has caused airlines including American, United and Southwest to cancel thousands of flights

into early November. A pause in Max production would hit Boeing assembly workers and the company's suppliers, including engine maker General Electric.

Chicago-based Boeing Co., which builds planes in Washington state and South Carolina, said it lost \$2.94 billion in the quarter, compared with a profit of \$2.2 billion a year earlier. It reported an adjusted loss of \$5.82 per share.

Revenue tumbled to \$15.75 billion from \$24.26 billion a year earlier.

EXCHANGE RATES	
Military rates	
Euro costs (July 26)	\$1.1442
Dollar buys (July 26)	€0.8740
British pound (July 26)	\$1.28
Japanese yen (July 26)	¥107.83
South Korean won (July 26)	₩1,150.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (dinar)	0.3770
British pound	\$1.2498
Canada (dollar)	1.3150
China (yuan)	¥6.8733
Denmark (krone)	6.6779
Egypt (pound)	£1.5897
Euro	\$1.1181/0.8944
Hong Kong (dollar)	7.8140
Hungary (forint)	251.59
Israel (shekel)	3.5240
Japan (yen)	108.50
Kuwait (dinar)	0.3044
Norway (krone)	8.6615
Philippines (peso)	51.15
Poland (zloty)	3.81
Saudi Arabia (riyal)	3.7505
Singapore (dollar)	1.3657
South Korea (won)	1,182.08
Switzerland (franc)	0.9883
Thailand (baht)	30.92
Turkey (lira)	5.7016
Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)	
INTEREST RATES	
Prime rate	5.50
Discount rate	3.00
Federals funds market rate	4.40
3-month bill	2.04
30-year bond	2.58

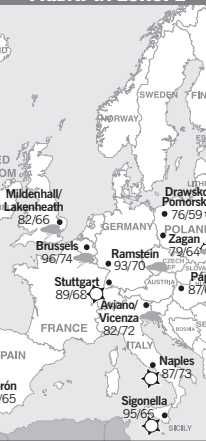
PACIFIC GAS PRICES				
Country	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Japan	---	\$3.419	---	\$3.099
Change in price	---	-3.0 cents	---	-1.0 cent
South Korea	\$2.429	---	\$3.449	\$3.129
Change in price	-3.0 cents	---	-3.0 cents	-1.0 cent
Guam	\$2.809*	\$3.179	\$3.429	---
Change in price	-3.0 cents	-3.0 cents	-3.0 cents	---

* Diesel EFD ** Midgrade
For the week of July 27-Aug. 2

MARKET WATCH	
July 24, 2019	
Dow Jones Industrials	-79.22
Nasdaq composite	70.10
Standard & Poor's 500	14.09
Russell 2000	25.46
	1,580.42

WEATHER OUTLOOK

FRIDAY IN EUROPE



SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

WEEKEND

SUMMER
OF

9

Tarantino creates an affectionate ode to moviemaking with lush, star-studded 'Once Upon a Time in Hollywood'

Pages 24-25

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

Disney presses play



ALLEN J. SCHABEN, LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS

Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge becomes a live-in video game with the Disney Parks app

By TODD MARTENS
Los Angeles Times

On a recent Friday evening, there were plenty of distractions to be found in Black Spire Outpost, the fictional intergalactic city that is the heart of Disneyland's Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge in Anaheim, Calif.

Some tried to catch a glimpse of the one-eyed diango-creature that lives in the pipes near a drinking fountain. Others jostled for a space to watch Disneyland's fireworks, standing just a few feet away from a charred-looking droid roasting prop meat. A pair of Stormtroopers joked with guests that they had drawn the attention of the evil First Order. And Resistance spy Vi Moradi was spotted rushing among the curved paths.

Amid this bounty of theme park activity, I stood alone near the clustered shopping stalls of the Black Spire Outpost marketplace, my face buried in a phone. While an obsession with personal screens is often considered a modern societal affliction, here on Galaxy's Edge it's encouraged.

Nestled inside the 1-year-old Play Disney Parks mobile app is an exploration-encouraging experience called the Star Wars Datapad. Largely a home to mini-puzzles and short quests that can be activated only while inside Disneyland's recently opened 14-acre area, the Datapad not only fleshes out the Galaxy's Edge backstory but also contains an ongoing game for control of the land itself.

With no tutorial and the occasional crash-inducing bug, it took me about 60 minutes to get a handle on everything the app can do — it essentially becomes an attraction that uses the land as a giant game board.

Galaxy's Edge isn't a place built for vacationers to check things off a list. With nine shops and one open

ride — a second, Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance, is due at Disney World on Dec. 5 and Disneyland on Jan. 17, 2020 — it's designed to encourage guests to participate in the action, be it role playing with in-character staff, strolling among the shops or playing the app.

Think of it as a physical space that's trying to better understand the lessons of our increasingly play-driven and digitally focused lifestyles. Galaxy's Edge as a whole represents an evolution in how we play in theme parks, and early indications of the still-in-development Datapad are that it too has aspirations to reshape guest involvement.

Together, they're making the long-tail bet that the theme park visitors of today — and the near future — have a hunger for more participatory entertainment, craving interactive experiences that, if not providing full user-direction, at least create the illusion of authorship. The land's sole open ride, Millennium Falcon: Smugglers Run, in fact requires six people to work together. No two rides may be identical.

"What the onset of the Digital Age has shown us is that you can make big impacts by providing a whole audience of people different pockets of experiences that they gravitate toward," says Susan Bonds, a former creative with Walt Disney Imagineering and the chief executive of 42 Entertainment, which specializes in branded augmented-reality experiences such as the company's viral campaign for "The Dark Knight."

"So when you think about gaming, some people are into the storytelling, and some people are into the fighting and some people are into collecting. There are so many dynamics of interest. Normally, you would think of a theme-park guest as an entity," she continues, "but now you can think about it as all these levels, and that gives you more opportunities to provide these nuanced moments."

Disneyland, of course, has always had game-like

activities. Shooting galleries were popular in the park's early days — the Frontierland Shootin' Exposition has survived and still stands — and rides such as Toy Story Midway Mania or Buzz Lightyear Astro Blasters essentially place guests in a giant video game. Even the queue of Indiana Jones Adventure is essentially a game: What happens if I pull this rope? Can we decode the carving on the wall?

A starring role

Galaxy's Edge goes further in that the Datapad asks guests to become a full-on character in the world.

While not as role-playing based as Ghost Town Alive at Knott's Berry Farm or a full experiential park such as Evermore in Utah, it aims to fully realize Disneyland's original dream — that by walling itself off from the outside world it can become not just static, movie-like sets but a place for visitors to have a starring role.

It's storytelling via world-building and environmental exploration rather than plot-construction, and in that sense, Disneyland rather closely resembles modern video games (or vice versa). Removed from Disneyland, the games of the Datapad — tuning radio waves or reconnecting virtual wires — are relatively simple, but make them location-based, and give them a time limit, and one starts to feel like an inhabitant in a cinematic world.

While one can play one puzzle and then drop it, the Datapad isn't designed to have a beginning, middle or end; instead, it encourages participants to build a profile and start to develop a persona that can adapt over time with the land. This is done by choosing missions that align with the First Order or the Resistance.

Resistance soldier Lt. Connix needs your help in returning stolen ship schematics.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

FROM PAGE 22

Moradi requests your assistance in analyzing a First Order ship, and Rose Tico asks you to check the stock of Resistance medical supplies. Such tasks are completed by wandering the land and finding ships, crates or droids to scan or hack. Sometimes, such actions trigger light interactions with the objects.

Then there's Outpost Control, the game within a game that allows guests to tap into data panels and install First Order or Resistance surveillance. If a panel has been flipped, it will display blue or red for good or evil. If your side wins, your profile will show where your allegiance resides.

"It's not like you can check a box and say, 'I am with the Resistance.' Your actions ultimately define how the world of Black Spire Outpost sees you," says Asa Kalama, who has overseen the interactive experiences of Galaxy's Edge, of the ambitions for the app.

Updates to the Datapad are expected this year — likely after Galaxy's Edge opens at Walt Disney World on Aug. 29. In its current state, the actions of the app largely live on screen rather than bleed into the physical space, aside from occasionally receiving virtual payment for a successful mission on Smugglers Run.

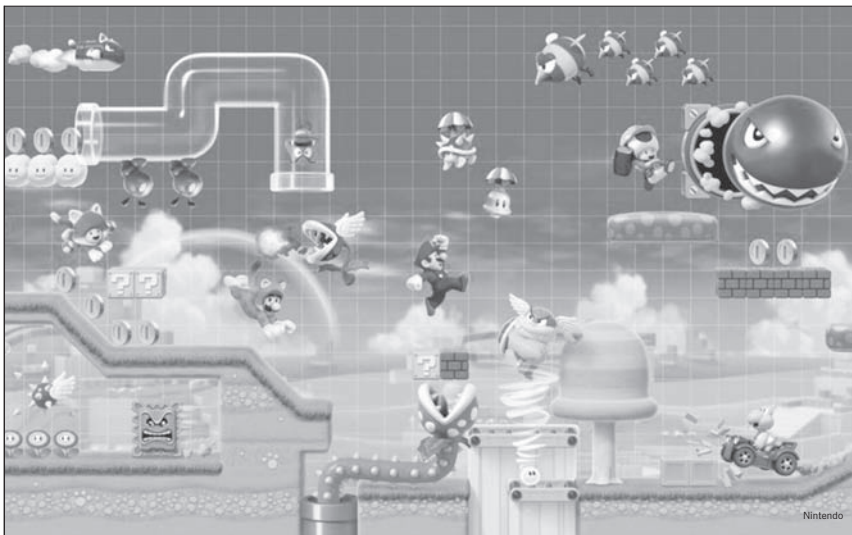
While one can tune into radio towers to download dialogue from the locals of Black Spire Outpost, and one can accumulate credits and align with a Star Wars faction, it's still unclear how, when or if these actions will manifest themselves in the land. It has long been teased, for instance, that a bounty hunter or bartender can remark on you in the cantina to approach you for Falcon-flying abilities, but such interactions haven't materialized.

That, many believe, is where the true magic will happen. A simple quest that asks guests to acquire and deliver something — say even a card with a message on it — from a Black Spire Outpost character or shop owner would go a long way toward shifting the tone of Galaxy's Edge from a theme park land to an actual locale.

Expect to see only more elements of play appear in our theme parks.

In development at Disney California Adventure is a Marvel-inspired land that will contain a Spider-Man attraction with an as-yet-undefined interactive element. Universal's parks, which have been a leader in game-like activities with their wand experiences at Wizarding World of Harry Potter, are developing lands based on Nintendo franchises, properties in which choice and play are vital.

"More and more, these experience and attractions are going to become more personalized," says Monte Lundie, a founder of the special effects-oriented theme park firm Technifex. He cites RFID and Bluetooth tech as further facilitating a future where theme parks respond one-to-one to guests. "I see that happening. People want to be able to, at times, control the experience."



Mario Maker 2 gives game designers a richer canvas

By GIESON CACHO
The Mercury News

The best art pushes people to create. Great works spark that desire to make music or put brush to canvas. With video games, that has been a little harder.

In the past, developers had to know a little of everything — programming, visuals and design. It's as if an artist had to be able to make the brushes and paint along with having the talent to draw. Thankfully, technology has advanced far enough that game-making tools are more accessible.

The tools are so easy to use, in fact, that whole games have been made around them, and one of the best examples of the genre is Super Mario Maker 2. The sequel to the 2015 hit carries over many of the features of the original and refines them in the Course Maker mode.

It performs a delicate balancing act that gives players more tools without making the creation process overwhelming. Nintendo has a built-in advantage because gamers have a wealth of knowledge about how Mario titles work. They innately know how Goombas behave and that question blocks contain power-ups.

The developers expertly use that familiarity to design a user interface that's simple to understand and fun to use. They give players a palette of objects at the top, and players use the Nintendo Switch touchscreen to pick and choose how they're laid out across the level. At times, the process can feel like drawing.

By experimenting with how objects are used, players can come up with interesting combinations. One of my favorite techniques is to super-size an enemy by giving it a mushroom. Another trick is the option to add

wings to a question block, making the power-up inside harder to reach.

For veterans of the first game, Nintendo added slopes that vary the terrain and allow Mario to slide into enemies. Super Mario Maker 2 also includes a wider array of enemies and gizmos. Players can also team up with friends to work on levels. There are even custom win conditions that require players to accomplish tasks like not jumping or avoiding damage in order to finish a course.

Every new tool expands the possibilities for each level. Players can encounter speed-run stages that test their platforming skills as they quickly run and jump through obstacles. Others will require concentration as they deal with multiple droids and keys in puzzle levels.

The discovery process still needs work. Course World lets players choose from popular, hot and new levels, and though this lets players find good fare, it's still tough finding excellent stages or ones that suit a player's tastes.

In Story Mode, the narrative isn't too complex. Mario and the toads finish Princess Peach's castle only to have Undodog destroy it by hitting the reset button. Players have to run through some of the 90 levels available. By doing that, they can earn coins that pay for the castle reconstruction. Mario also has to tackle some side missions along the way, but the courses themselves offer inspiration for the type of stages players can build.

Super Mario Maker 2 offers a Gradus-type of shoot-'em up experience using a Koopa Clown Car that spits fire. Elsewhere, players can run across puzzle elements in the Ancient Seesaw Fortress.

Players can draw ideas from these levels and take a stab at being the next Shigeru Miyamoto. Super Mario Maker 2 provides the right tools for the job. All players have to do is put in the time.

Platform: Nintendo Switch

Online: supernariomaker.nintendo.com

Mario Maker: Few escape this panic-inducing level

It's a level we all know, some of us by heart: the 1-1 level of Super Mario Bros. — arguably the first, perfectly executed in-game-tutorial-you-didn't-know-was-a-tutorial. The level is precious. Sacred, even.

Until now. A monster with Mario Maker 2 turned the first level many of us had ever played into a fiery hellscape from which few have emerged unscathed. And one of them is YTSunny — the designer of the course.

It is by far the most anxiety I've ever experienced watching a video-game clip.

Mario Maker gives the player free rein to design any kind of Mario level they can dream up. It provides all of the blocks, Goombas and pipes a true Mariofan could ask for, plus all of the other design assets Nintendo itself has used across the Super Mario universe of games.

Once a designer is finished, he or she can launch the level and share a code for others to play.

YTSunny, a Mario pro, has nearly 600,000 subscribers on YouTube. One recent video, a walk-through of the first half-hour of Super Mario Odyssey, has 5 million views. YTSunny specializes in tutorials and Mario Maker levels.

In this panic-inducing level, YTSunny seems to have thrown rotating fire bars everywhere. Except they are strategically placed, you can make it through the level in the 50 seconds allowed (Yes, of course there's also a timer. Why wouldn't there be?) if you follow the only route that will lead to success. And manage to not get hit by a wall of fire in the meantime.

If you want to try it yourself, YTSunny shared the code: YXL-D4C-TQF is what will get you access to the 1-1 from hell.

— The Washington Post

WEEKEND: MOVIES

Taking on HOLLYWOOD

By LINDSEY BAHR
Associated Press

Once upon a time, not too far from Hollywood, two of the world's biggest movie stars were talking about what it's like to screw up on set.

"Messing up the lines in front of the entire cast and crew?" Leonardo DiCaprio said. "It's the going-to-school-in-your-underwear nightmare."

"It's awful," Brad Pitt chimed in. "When a scene's not working. When YOU'RE not working in a scene. ... It goes beyond not being able to get the lines. You have 100 people there who are all ready to get on with their day and get home."

DiCaprio hasn't exactly had to resort to dunking his head in ice water after a too-late and too-fun night out, as his actor character does in "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood."

But Pitt? "Oh, I've done that," he laughed.

The two actors, who skyrocketed to fame around the same time more than a quarter century ago, have joined forces for the first time in a major motion picture to take on their own industry, their own town and even their own egos in a time of great change — 1969 Hollywood. Hitting theaters nationwide on Friday, it's also reunited them with Quentin Tarantino.

Once known only as "Tarantino's Manson Movie," the actual film is something very different. Manson is a character, as are his most notorious followers. And of course, Sharon Tate is depicted

too, and played by Margot Robbie. But as with most Tarantino movies, it's not exactly what you think.

"The best of what 1969 had to offer you kind of experience through Sharon," Robbie said.

Like going to the Playboy Mansion with Mama Cass and go-go dancing the night away. Or rolling up to a movie theater to check out your latest matinee and getting a free ticket because you're on the poster. "She kind of represented the arms open, doors open sort of policy," she added.

"After 1969 and after her death, things kind of changed in Hollywood and people closed their doors and shut the gates."

The light and the dark of the imminent end of the '60s is the backdrop to what is otherwise a classic star-driven two-hander. "Once Upon a Time" is awash in nostalgia, showbiz lore (and cameos), wistfulness and Tarantino-wit that allows DiCaprio, as a past-his-prime television cowboy in a moment of crippling self-doubt, and Pitt, as his devoted stuntman, to do what they do best: Charm.

"I don't think you can completely act that kind of dynamic," Pitt said.

The change happening in Hollywood around 1969 led to many on-set discussions of what was going on at the time with the new batch of filmmakers upending the establishment and leaving room for the Coppolas and the Scorseses to break in.

"The 'take and wait,'" Pitt said. "Like, we'll get the take but we're getting through this story." Tarantino does that often.

It also made them all reflect on their own industry at the moment, where

streaming is disrupting the old ways but once again ushering in new voices. As producers, Pitt, DiCaprio and Robbie all find it exciting.

"What's incredible is this wealth of talent from writers to directors to actors that are getting opportunities now. It's quite extraordinary," Pitt said. "You see that we're not so special."

DiCaprio is even a little jealous to see some "out-of-the-box ideas" and "really ballsy storytelling" that he tried and failed to get made just a decade ago now not only being financed, but made at a high quality too.

"There's so many more opportunities," Robbie added. "I'm very grateful to be playing roles in this day and age than perhaps when Sharon was."

But it's not lost on them that they all happen to be promoting a "big budget art piece like this," as DiCaprio called it, from one of the major studios whose future is going to depend on people actually going to see films like "Once Upon a Time" in a movie theater.

"Hopefully it becomes like a concert experience," DiCaprio said. "People want to get together on the Friday night and feel the energy of the crowd and the excitement of a movie coming out that they've been anticipating rather than the isolation of being home. Hopefully that's not lost in the sauce, because that's half the fun of it, right?"

"Once Upon a Time" is Tarantino's ninth film, and, according to him, his second to last.

Pitt and DiCaprio believe him, too. "I always imagined it as his little box set that he wants to just hang up on the wall and that's it,"

DiCaprio said.

'Once Upon a Time' stars DiCaprio, Pitt, Robbie reconcile a changing Tinseltown

"That completes the Tarantino, you know, cinematic experience."

"The Tarantino 10," Pitt added.

As with many button-pushing Tarantino projects, "Once Upon a Time" has been at the center of a few heated public discussions, including the morality of making a movie about Tate and Manson, and the casting of Emile Hirsch, who in 2015 pleaded guilty to assaulting a female studio executive at Sundance.

Then there was that tense moment at the Cannes Film Festival press conference where a reporter asked why Robbie's character has so few lines and Tarantino curiously responded that he rejected the hypothesis.

Tarantino declined to be interviewed for this article. But his response touched a nerve culturally.

"He's an incredibly unique filmmaker," DiCaprio said. "And whatever choices he makes, he's one of those rare filmmakers in this industry that has retained the right to say, 'This is a piece of art that I'm going to give to the world. And this is what this character represents, and this is what this character represents. And this is my piece of work.' ... That's why we consistently want to work with somebody like that."

It's clear his actors are in awe of him and what he brings to their art form. It's the kind of admiration that can result in two true movie stars talking like fans.

"You know he's got a four-hour cut of this?" Pitt said excitedly.

"Yeah," DiCaprio responded. "I'm still waiting to see the four-hour cut of 'Django.'"



"Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" stars Leonardo DiCaprio, from left, Margot Robbie and Brad Pitt.

PASCAL LE SECRETAIR, GETTY IMAGES/Disney

WEEKEND: MOVIES



SONY-COLUMBIA PICTURES/AP photos

Quentin Tarantino's "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" visits 1969 Los Angeles, where everything is changing, as TV star Rick Dalton (Leonardo DiCaprio, above) and his longtime stunt double Cliff Booth (Brad Pitt, top right) make their way around an industry they hardly recognize anymore. Co-starring Margot Robbie, right.



A radiant Hollywood fable

Set around the time of the Manson murders, Tarantino's 'Once Upon a Time' an affectionate ode to moviemaking

By JAKE COYLE
Associated Press

Quentin Tarantino has, for a while now, been reminding us what's so great about movies — at least, what he thinks is so great about them. He's made an old-fashioned double-feature ("Death Proof," of "Grindhouse"), resurrected the wide-screen format of 70mm Ultra Panavision ("The Hateful Eight") and generally presided as the preeminent B-movie evangelist for a generation. The power and thrill of exploitation movies, he has earnestly espoused, can conquer all evils — or at least slavery ("Django Unchained") and the Nazis ("Inglourious Basterds").

But "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood," set in 1969 Los Angeles, is Tarantino's most affectionate and poignant ode yet to the movie business. It's a breezy, woozy Hollywood fable that luxuriates in the simple pleasures of the movies and the colorful swirl of the Dream Factory's backlot. Some pleasures are nostalgic, and some — like driving down Sunset Boulevard or martinis at Musso & Frank — are everlasting.

Here, movie love feels contagious, like something in the air. In one of the film's best scenes, Margot Robbie's Sharon Tate explains at a theater's ticket office that she's in the movie, the newly released caper "The Wrecking Crew." ("I'm the klutz!" she says cheerfully. Inside, she giggles with delight at seeing herself on the big screen, giddily mimicking her character's martial-arts moves and watching to see if the audience laughs at one of her lines.

The pleasures in "Once Upon a Time" are also ours. Tarantino has lowered his typically feverish temperature to a warming simmer, bathing us in the golden California light and the movie-star glow of his leading men, Leonardo DiCaprio and Brad Pitt. They spend copious amounts of time driving through the Hollywood Hills in a creamy Coupe de Ville, riding along like Butch and Sundance and just as nice to look at.

DiCaprio is Rick Dalton, a Burt Reynolds-type actor of TV Westerns (his claim to fame is the '50s hit "Bounty Law") whose career is stalling. Pitt is Cliff Booth, his stunt double and best friend, a war veteran with a bad reputation but a friendly, relaxed manner. They have a natural, easy rapport, with Booth doubling as a drinking buddy and support system for Dalton, who's increasingly anxious

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

This may be Tarantino's most soul-baring and sensitive film yet, mediated as it is through so many layers of film fandom: old film trailers, classic LA movie theaters, large format one-sheets, trinkets, technology, the daughters of Hollywood heavyweights who populate the cast. However, it's also his most conservative film.

— Katie Walsh/TNS

"Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" may not be Tarantino's best work, but it might be his most personal. Tarantino, who grew up in Los Angeles, has compared his film to Alfonso Cuarón's "Roma," also inspired by a childhood time and place. With its grace notes of sorrow and glimmers of optimism, "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" is both an ode to a bygone era and a celebration of an art form that, in the right hands, can still be vibrant and thrilling.

— Rafer Guzman/Newsday

The real payoff in "Hollywood" is just that: Hollywood, and Tarantino's sincere adoration of the actors and genres he so admires. ... Despite some wonderful actors, "Hollywood" is more about idealized memory than fully realized people.

— Michael Phillips/Chicago Tribune

about his typecast future. (Al Pacino, as his agent, urges him to head to Italy for a spaghetti Western.)

In DiCaprio's finest sequence, he chats between takes on a Western called "Lancer" with a frightfully serious method-acting 8-year-old co-star (Julia Butters) before forgetting his lines. After a bout of self-loathing in his trailer, he returns and nails the scene. DiCaprio, a preternaturally self-possessed actor himself, captures the whole arc beautifully.

When word got out that Tarantino's latest film would take place around the Manson murders, it was easy to wonder what genre mayhem the director would bring to this epochal moment. We know what carnage resulted when Zen Zed was dead, so what did Tarantino have in store for the demise of the '60s?

It's not that "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" doesn't revolve around that grisly tragedy. It looms always in the

background, and eventually in the foreground, too, after Booth picks up a hitchhiker (Margaret Qualley) who leads him to the Manson compound at Spahn Ranch, the former production site of TV and film Westerns where Manson's mostly female acolytes emerge and Booth goes to check on the owner, an old friend, George Spahn (Bruce Dern). Dalton and Booth are fictional concoctions surrounded by real people, including their neighbors: Tate and her husband, Roman Polanski (Rafal Zawierucha).

By the film's climax, blood will spill and movie-made historical revisionism will have its day. But I suspect a lot of Tarantino fans will be taken by surprise at the film's leisurely pace, set more to a (and this a good thing) "Jackie Brown" speed. As in that film, Tarantino isn't purely living in an over-the-top movie fantasy world, but one teetering intriguingly between dream and reality. The dialogue and action has slowed down enough to allow a little wistfulness and melancholy to creep in.

At times, his path is a little wayward and prone to digressions. Tarantino feels perilously close to simply turning his movie into several of Dalton's, so eager is he (like the Coens were in "Hail, Caesar!") to lovingly adopt those period styles. But usually, the detours are hard to resist. In one, Booth ends up in a fight with Bruce Lee (Mike Moh) on the set of "The Green Hornet."

And if you're going to make a movie that celebrates what's grand about Hollywood, it helps to have Brad Pitt in it. The chemistry between him and DiCaprio, together for the first time, is a delight; I would gladly watch them drive around lacquered, golden-hour Los Angeles, with cinematographer Robert Richardson trailing them, for longer than the already lengthy running time of "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood."

Pitt, in particular, appears so utterly self-possessed. It's a swaggering grade-A movie star performance in a movie that celebrates all that movie stars can accomplish — which, for Tarantino, is anything. That the youthful, exuberant Tate was robbed of that potential is one of the wrongs Tarantino is righting here. But his fairy tale also swells with an even larger and optimistic vision. For today's doomsayers of movies, which are seen by some as a less potent art form, "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" imagines an apocalypse denied. Tate, and the movies, will live forever.

"Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" is rated R for language throughout, some strong graphic violence, drug use and sexual references. Running time: 161 minutes.

WEEKEND: GADGETS

GADGET WATCH

Affordable Bluetooth earbuds a feat

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

Just a few years ago some smartphones eliminated the 3.5 mm headphone port, forcing users to get an adapter or go the Bluetooth route. Then the truly wireless earbud category was born, eliminating the wire connection for Bluetooth headsets. But many of the new wireless earbuds were costly.

Now, iFrogz (a Zagg brand)

has launched the Airtime truly wireless earbuds, its first entry in the category, and it seems to be a winner in all aspects.

In the first few minutes of use, it was easy to appreciate the product's great sound and numerous features, and anyone who's purchased it has already appreciated its affordable price.

Built-in Bluetooth 5.0 paired the Airtimes to my iPhone XS seamlessly on the first try, and whenever I opened the storage case in auto-pair mode. The case doubles as a charging case and gives you about 15 hours of listening before a power source is needed. There's also a quick charge feature giving the earbuds 1.5 hours of playtime from just a 10-minute charge.

The sound comes from 8 mm drivers in each earbud, which impressed me with clear sound and a nice amount of bass at all volumes. They are built with three equalizer settings (signature, podcast and bass).

The earbuds have an ergonomic design and come with three sizes of ear tips for a snug and comfortable fit. Multifunction controls are easy to use — just press on the earbud to change tracks, answer calls and access Siri and Google Assistant voice assistants.

Each earbud also has a microphone for hands-free calls. Other features include a sweat-proof IPX4 rating and ergonomic sport wings; both help make these

an ideal choice for workouts or lawn mowing in 100-degree Texas summer heat, as I did during my testing.

Online: Zagg.com; \$59.99, available in black, blue, peach and white

Another Zagg brand, InvisibleShield, is a leading touch screen protection solution now available with the all-new Ultra VisionGuard and Ultra Clear for the Samsung Galaxy S10 5G in addition to Glass+ VisionGuard, and Glass+ for the LG V50 ThinQ 5G.

The Ultra VisionGuard (\$39.99) and Glass+ VisionGuard (\$44.99) protect your device and your eyes from harmful high-energy visible blue light. InvisibleShield Ultra Clear (\$44.99) is clear and comes with advanced clarity, a glass-like surface for edge-to-edge protection.

The Airtime wireless earbuds are the first from iFrogz.



iFrogz/TNS

tion for Galaxy S10 5G devices.

The InvisibleShield Glass+ (\$39.99) has a smooth, tempered glass surface and will protect from drops, scratches and smudges. It claims to deliver up to three times more impact protection than an unprotected screen.

InvisibleShield backs its screen protectors with an industry-leading limited lifetime warranty and will replace the InvisibleShield if it ever gets worn or damaged for the life of the device.

Online: Zagg.com

Moshi's Captus Rolltop backpack caught my attention when the description included, among other things, a bottom section for shoes up to size 13.

The attractive backpack has numerous compartments for anything else



Moshi/TNS



VisionGuard/TNS

The Ultra VisionGuard and Glass+ VisionGuard protect your device from scratches and your eyes from visible blue light.

you'll want to carry including a padded compartment for laptops up to 15 inches. You'll be packing and packing if your goal is just to fill it (as I did), but remember, once it's full with more than you need, you'll have to carry it on your back.

Specifically, Moshi claims the Captus contains 45 liters of space, which is a lot if you think about it as liquid. But it's not waterproof, so for course I didn't test it that way.

Zippered compartments hold everything you need, and a back pocket has an RFID shield, which makes it ideal to store your smartphone or credit cards safely.

The compartment on the bottom isn't for just shoes. You can stuff anything you want in there, including a change of clothes, cables or whatever will fit.

The backpack has everything you'll need to make it fit right and tight including adjustable straps and padding. Available in sandstone beige and denim blue.

Online: moshi.com; \$199.95

Why you shouldn't allow your smartphone to go swimming

By STEVE ALEXANDER
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

On a lake trip over July 4th weekend, my daughter's iPhone 7 Plus ended up taking a dive. It was found in about 3 feet of water 24 hours later, still working but with some permanent damage. The experience provided a few lessons.

Immersion in water used to ruin a cellphone. That's less true today because many newer phones are "water-resistant" — but they are still not "waterproof." Water-resistant phones are only designed to survive underwater for a while, under certain conditions. And most cellphone warranties still don't cover water damage.

Be a little skeptical about water-resistant phones. Samsung was criticized for allegedly exaggerating the after-immersion performance of its water-resistant phones. Those phones were rated IP68, meaning they should survive 30 minutes underwater at a depth of 4.9 feet.



iStock

That raises an interesting question: What can you expect from a phone that has spent some time underwater? I was surprised when my daughter's phone emerged from the lake with its screen glowing and still worked — mostly. To appreciate my surprise, consider that the iPhone 7 Plus is an "older" device whose water-resistant qualities are less robust than today's phones. Apple said the phone can withstand 30 minutes in 3 feet of water (its rating is IP67). But it actually survived 48

times that long.

While that was impressive, the iPhone still had problems:

- The phone's camera suffered the most. Some moisture had gotten inside, which meant the camera took hazy photos. This seemed to improve when the iPhone had been dry a while, but then the haziness returned.

This underscored something I had learned years ago, when moisture seeped into the camera on my iPhone 5 during normal operating conditions: The camera is the most vulnerable part of a phone, and even a tiny bit of water will ruin it. (In that case, Apple replaced the phone because it was judged to have a manufacturing flaw rather than water damage.) The damage to my daughter's iPhone suggests that the camera remains its most vulnerable part, even in the age of water-resistant phones.

• The phone's touch screen was initially a bit sluggish, and sometimes did things I hadn't asked it to. But after a few days

in dry air, the touch screen worked fine.

- At first, the phone's screen was "jumpy" and the phone would shut down unexpectedly. This was probably because moisture had affected the battery. (I could easily restart the phone by plugging it in.) But those problems also disappeared in a few days.

• The phone's cellular and Wi-Fi connections worked perfectly. • My daughter's chief concern was whether she could retrieve the thousands of photos stored on the phone. Fortunately, the phone's flash memory was unaffected, and all the photos were still there.

As it turned out, my daughter's photos had been backed up earlier to iCloud, Apple's online service — but only because she had paid extra for enough online storage to hold thousands of photos. If your phone has a lot of photos, think about whether you have backed them up — before your phone goes swimming.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe



PHOTOS BY MARKUS SCHREIBER/AP

A "Frankfurter Kitchen" is part of the exhibition "Weimar: The Essence and Value of Democracy" currently taking place at the German Historical Museum in Berlin.

Focused on democracy

New exhibit at the German Historical Museum reconsiders the Weimar Republic of 1919-'33



A poster calls for workers, citizens, farmers and soldiers of all tribes in Germany to unite.

By FRANK JORDANS
Associated Press

A divided nation grappling with rising inequality, new mass media and the growth of populist politics.

Sounds familiar?

Germany's first democracy, the Weimar Republic of 1919-1933, has long been regarded as a lesson in political failure. Lately, it has also been held up as a cautionary tale for the present.

It emerged from the ruins of World War I, as a defeated nation tried to reinvent itself in the midst of economic and social turmoil. It ended with Adolf Hitler's Nazi party seizing power, persecuting minorities and leading Germany into another calamitous war.

A new exhibition in Berlin, 100 hundred years later, is questioning the perception that the era's political and economic disaster was inevitable and stressing the lasting impact of the Weimar Republic.

Among the 250 items on display at the German Historical Museum in Berlin are campaign posters highlighting the political debates of the era, from the fight for secular education to a debate over the expropriation of Germany's aristocracy.

A startlingly modern kitchen reflects the efforts that the era's designers made to accommodate the needs of working women and the worldwide influence of artistic and architectural trends like the Bauhaus movement.

Radio recordings by prominent figures, including the physicist Albert Einstein, reveal the buzz surrounding this new medium and the way it sped up

the news cycle — for better and for worse.

Advertisements for family planning ("Do not go blindly into marriage!") and clips from 1920s films about gay and lesbian love affairs reflect the newfound confidence of a generation willing to challenge sexual norms.

Like "Babylon Berlin," a crime series set in the cabaret halls and back alleys of interwar Berlin, the Weimar exhibition hints at dark times to come. There are the military firearms finding their way onto the streets and fueling political strife that would result in hundreds of political assassinations. There are also the photographs of desperate men and women walking the streets with sandwich boards looking for work at a time when hyperinflation was rampant, food prices were skyrocketing and hunger was stalking middle-class families.

But unlike many historical exhibitions in Germany, this one doesn't dwell on the Nazis.

"We didn't just want to view Weimar from its ending," said Simone Erpel, the show's curator.



This military firearm is part of the exhibition, which will run through Sept. 22.

Universal suffrage, the principle of gender equality, the establishment of works councils that gave employees a say in how their companies are run were all achievements the Weimar Republic can lay claim to, she said.

The 1919 Weimar constitution — devised in the eponymous central German city at a time when Berlin was too rowdy for reasoned debate — also provided the foundations for the country's successful post-World War II constitution.

If the Weimar period offers any lesson for the present, it's that democracy shouldn't be taken for granted, said Raphael Gross, the director of the German Historical Museum. And while democracy means majority rule, a willingness to seek compromise is essential for it to truly serve all and avoid sliding into a popular dictatorship, he said.

"Part of democracy is being aware that however much one is convinced of one's own position, nobody can be as confident of the truth as if they were God," he said.

KNOW & GO

"Weimar: The Essence and Value of Democracy" is being shown at the German Historical Museum (Deutsches Historische Museum) in Berlin until Sept. 22 daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Entry is 8 euros (\$9) for adults, free for visitors under 18. A sister exhibition titled "Democracy Lab" is included in the ticket price.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

Best places for kidding around in Europe

I'm often inspired by families on the road. Last summer, on a ferry between Scotland's Oban and the Isle of Mull, I met a family from Texas. The parents were taking their kids on a yearlong adventure through Europe and told me how they'd realized there's no better education or quality family time than traveling together—and I wholeheartedly agree. The key is balancing educational sightseeing with fun activities.

After years of traveling with me around Europe, my kids Jackie and Andy had a good list of what they considered its best kid-friendly experiences to balance out my heavy museum-going. Here are some of my family's favorites.

In cycling-happy Copenhagen, it's a joy to bike to dazzling Tivoli Gardens, a grand amusement park that's been running since 1843. It's like a Hans Christian Andersen theme park, with 20 acres of games, marching bands and rides ranging from vintage cars to roller coasters to a Ferris wheel that resembles a clock. Free concerts, pantomime theater, ballet, acrobats, puppets and other shows pop up all over the park, with a different event roughly every half hour. With or without kids, this place is a true magic kingdom.

Budapest's top attraction for kids is also my top recommendation for adults: the city's inviting thermal baths. They're like your hometown swimming pool—except the water is 100 degrees, there are plenty of jets and bubbles, and you're surrounded by Hungarians. Of the city's more than two dozen bath complexes, the **Gellert Baths** offer the best thermal-bath thrills for kids, with an outdoor area and wave pool. Or splash around in a warm-water

whirlpool at the grand **Szechenyi Baths**—a casual option that welcomes plenty of tourists but remains popular with locals.



Rick Steves

into a scavenger hunt and challenge your kids to find different species. You can even complete the fairy tale and take a horse-drawn carriage up to the castles.

Set aside some time for an even more thrilling experience: a summer luge ride. At the nearby **Tegelberg summer luge**, kids young and old hop in a wheeled sled like go-cart, ride up a track to the top of a hill and scream back down on a banked course. It's a quintessential alpine activity.

France's Loire Valley is also famous for opulent residences. The chateaux in the region are remarkable, but youngsters might lose steam after one or two. The **Chateau de Cheverny** offers a unique demonstration that's perfect for animal-loving kids: The marquis keeps a kennel of 70 hunting hounds—half English foxhound and half French Pouter. They're given food once a day, and the feeding ritual is impressive. The hungry

kids' imaginations with its dramatic setting and fanciful architecture that inspired Walt Disney's Cinderella castle. Inside, the exquisite two-million-stone mosaic floor is a visual encyclopedia of animals and plants—make it



CAMERON HEWITT/Ricksteves.com

The **Gellert thermal baths** in Budapest offer a huge, deliciously enjoyable wave pool that will toss you around like a surfer.

hounds fill the little kennel rooftop and watch the trainer (who knows every dog's name) bring in troughs of delectable raw meat. He opens the gate, and the dogs gather around the food without touching it—yelping hysterically. Only when the trainer signals can they dig in. It's an exercise in control, and quite exciting.

Of course, the huge parks of Europe's biggest cities are some of the best spots to reinvigorate tired kids. London's sprawling **Hyde Park** is the city's backyard—and one of the best places in Europe for museum'd-out kids to play and run free.

Even as my kids aged out of park outings, London's live theater scene remained at the top of their lists. **London's West End** theaters have several shows that particularly appeal to kids, currently including "Wicked," "The Lion King" and the two-part "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child." You'll appreciate the talented performers, and they'll revel in the colorful costumes, catchy tunes and familiar stories.

Rick Steves (ricksteves.com) writes European travel guidebooks and hosts travel shows on public television and public radio. Email him at rick@ricksteves.com and follow his blog on Facebook.

TOP TRAVEL PICKS

Bards in Nuremberg

One of the best free outdoor music festivals in Germany unfolds this weekend against the pleasing backdrop of Nuremberg's Old Town.

Bardentreffen, or Meeting of the Bards, is more than a jam session featuring folksy singer-songwriter types, as its musical concept embraces contemporary and experimental music, too.

An official program consisting of 90 concerts across nine stages is bolstered by the presence of untold numbers of musicians busking in the streets.

This year's edition has adopted "World Wind Accordion" as its theme. About 20 concerts will feature artists from around the globe playing this instrument. Concerts begin at 5 p.m. on July 26 and at 2 p.m. on July 27 and 28. Entry to the festival is free, but the purchase of a silver accordion pin for 5 euros helps to offset organizational costs and makes a nice souvenir. Online: bardentreffen.nuernberg.de

Knights in Austria

The Castle World Herberberg in Reutte, Austria, is an attraction made up of a medieval fortress, museum and the world's longest pedestrian suspension bridge. Once a year, the ensemble hosts a long weekend of Middle Ages-themed entertainment in the form of a market, mock battles and parades.



Karen Bradbury

Read more about things to do in the Europe Traveler blog: [strips.com/blogs/europe-traveler](https://www.strips.com/blogs/europe-traveler)

What's billed as Europe's biggest historical event of its kind features tournaments in which knights in armor battle on foot and on horseback, and battles are fought with cannons and spear-wielding warriors. Other attractions include a children's zone with playground and petting zoo, a market place, camps and concerts. Daily parades take place with more than 1,000 re-enactors portraying characters spanning nearly 2,000 years of history.

The "Zeitreise Ehrenberg Ritterspiele" starts at 10 a.m. daily July 26-28. Single-day entry tickets for adults cost 24 euros when purchased at the gate, entry for ages 6-15 costs 12 euros, and ages five and under enter free. A family ticket for four costs 56 euros. Tickets for entry after 6:30 p.m. are available at reduced rates. Online: ritterturniere.com

Fireworks in Mainz

Live music and a dazzling fireworks show are the two main features of Mainzer Sommerlichter, a three-day festival that plays out on both sides of the Rhine River in Mainz.

The event features a street food mile, midway with rides and many wine stands, as well as stage shows featuring acrobats and fire artists. The musical program caters to wide tastes, with DJ sessions for those who like to dance and jazz for those who prefer a more relaxed vibe. On Sunday, a program geared to children includes face-painting and a sensory path to be experienced barefoot.

The highlight event is Saturday's show of fireworks synchronized to music. The display begins at approximately 10:45 p.m. and lasts for about half an hour.

Festivities get underway from 6 p.m. on July 26, from 3 p.m. on July 27 and from 11 a.m. on July 28. Entry is free. Online: mainzer-sommerlichter.de

Passion plays

Passion plays are religious dramas dealing with the life of Jesus Christ, particularly the final period of his life, crucifixion and resurrection. They've been performed since medieval times, often as a form of thanks to Jesus or a saint in return for relief from the plague. Such plays are



© passionsspiele-erl

The **Tirolean town of Erl, Austria**, puts on its **Passion Play**, which has been done every six years since 1613, this year through October.

still staged in a handful of European communities. They're usually performed in certain years only, but in regularly occurring cycles. The Tirolean town of Erl lays claim to staging the oldest such play in all the German-speaking countries, having first performed theirs as the result of a vow made in 1613.

Nowadays, approximately 600 amateur actors from the village's population of about 1,450 participate in the Passion Play. It features outstanding scenes of the Way of the Cross, an up-to-date script and specially-composed music performed live by a choir and orchestra.

Visitors can take in a performance in a purpose-built playhouse accommodating up to

1,500 viewers through October. An explanation of the scenes in English helps those who might struggle with German. Dates of performances are Aug. 3, 10, 24, 25 and 31; Sept. 1, 7, 8, 14, 15, 21, 22, 28-29 and Oct. 5. Ticket prices range from 27 to 39 euros when booked online. Online: tinyurl.com/y6xtm7pv

Those who can't make it to Erl might wish to wait for what's likely the most famous of all German passion plays, which is staged in Oberammergau, Germany. This play, which is performed just once every 10 years, will be performed on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from May 16-Oct. 4 in 2020. Tickets are already bookable online at passionsspiele-oberammergau.de.

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Europe



A Neapolitan-style pizza with buffalo mozzarella, cheese, basil, mushrooms and olive oil on a thin crust from Pizzeria da Massimo in downtown Pozzuoli.

Pizzeria in Pozzuoli has big, tasty pizzas at a good price

By SCOTT WYLAND
Stars and Stripes

There are so many superb pizzerias in Italy's sprawling Campania region, which includes Naples, Capri, Pompeii and the Amalfi Coast, that you'd have to make it your life's mission to try them all.

When the word "best" showed up in several online reviews for Pizzeria da Massimo in the Naples' suburb of Pozzuoli, I was curious and skeptical. Which pizzerias were they comparing it against? How many places had they tried?

Located in Pozzuoli's busy restaurant quarter, Massimo is casual, no-frills and inexpensive. Mild temperatures and a brisk sea breeze made the street-side patio inviting.

Except for appetizers and a few salads, the menu is all pizzas. One section has classic pizzas such as Margherita, marinara, multi-cheese and some with assorted toppings. Their prices range from 3 euros (\$3.35) to 7 euros (\$7.85).

A creative offering is the Peter Pan, topped with white cheese, mozzarella, french fries, olive oil and Vienna sausage for 5 euros.

The special pizzas are more elaborate and cost 7 to 9 euros. For example, Vesuvio is two-layered with fresh ricotta, buffalo mozzarella, salami, ham, pepper and mushrooms, priced at 8 euros.

I ordered a Champignons for 5 euros. It has buffalo mozzarella, mushrooms, cheese, olive oil and basil.

The mozzarella was light and almost melted in my mouth. The thin, Neapolitan-style crust was coated in seasoned olive oil that made it moist and flavorful. The paste, made from locally grown tomatoes, had the light, pungent taste you'll only find in this region.



And it was hefty.

Was it the best pizza I've ever had in Italy? I'd rate it high, but would have to try out at least 50 more pizzerias before I use superlatives.

Massimo gets points for its friendly servers. A waiter gave me a free after-dinner limoncello shot. So all things considered, Massimo is among the best pizzerias you'll find for the money.

wyland.scott@stripes.com
Twitter: @wylandstripes

PIZZERIA DA MASSIMO

Location: Via Montenuovo
Licola Patria 5, Pozzuoli
80078

Hours: 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m.
and 6:30 p.m.-11:30 p.m.
Tuesday through Saturday;
6:30 p.m.-11:30 p.m. Sunday
and Monday

Dress: Casual

Parking: Streetside and

parking garage nearby

Phone: +39 081 524 3262

Online: facebook.com/pg/
pizzeriadamassimopozzuoli/
menu/?ref=page_internal

— Scott Wyland



PHOTOS BY SCOTT WYLAND/Stars and Stripes

Pizzeria da Massimo's variety of pizzas, friendly service and casual ambiance makes it popular among Americans and local Italians.

Delectable pasta and shrimp dish a Venetian celebration

By America's Test Kitchen

Seafood has always been central to Venetian cuisine. The earliest Venetians were skilled fishermen, and their diet relied heavily on the bounty found in the city's lagoon ecosystem.

And while the Veneto may not be as famous for pasta dishes as some other regions, spaghetti con le schie is a Venetian celebration of the uniquely delicious small shrimp found in their waters.

While shrimp of this size found statewide are often unappealing (lacking in flavor and quality), we loved the sweet, briny flavors and ease of this

dish and decided to develop a simple shrimp pasta that would taste just as good in our kitchens.

We began by halving large shrimp, which have reliably good flavor. We then reinforced the shrimp presence by first cooking the shrimp shells in oil and wine. Shrimp shells are rich in glutamates, which add meaty depth, as well as volatile fatty acids, which generate fresh, delicate flavors when cooked.

The result was a deeply flavored shrimp sauce. Some garlic, butter, lemon zest and fresh parsley were all we needed to finish this flavorful weeknight dish.

SPAGHETTINI WITH SHRIMP

Servings: 6-8

Start to finish: 30 minutes

Ingredients

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 pounds large shrimp (26 to 30 per pound), peeled, deveined and halved crosswise, shells reserved

1 cup dry white wine
5 garlic cloves, minced
Salt and pepper

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup minced fresh parsley
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 4 pieces

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons grated lemon zest, plus lemon wedges for serving

1 pound spaghetti or thin spaghetti

Directions

Heat $\frac{1}{4}$ cup oil in 12-inch skillet over high heat until shimmering. Add shrimp shells and cook, stirring frequently, until they begin to turn spotty brown, 2 to 4 minutes. Off heat, carefully add wine. Once bubbling subsides, return skillet to medium heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Strain wine mixture through fine-mesh strainer into

large bowl, pressing on solids to extract as much liquid as possible; discard solids. (You should have about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup wine mixture.) Wipe skillet clean with paper towels.

Heat remaining oil and garlic in now-empty skillet over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until garlic is fragrant and just beginning to brown, about 30 seconds. Add reserved wine mixture and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt and bring to simmer. Add shrimp, then cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until just opaque, about 2 minutes. Off heat, stir in parsley, butter and lemon zest.

Meanwhile, bring 4 quarts of water to boil in large pot. Add pasta and 1 tablespoon salt and cook, stirring often, until al dente. Reserve $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooking water, then drain pasta and return it to pot. Add sauce and toss to coat. Adjust consistency with reserved cooking water as needed. Season with pepper to taste. Serve with lemon wedges.



JOE KELLER, AMERICA'S TEST KITCHEN/AP

Spaghettini with Shrimp is inspired by a tasty Venetian dish.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

Return to roots

In any tongue, an emotional visit to a father's Bulgarian homeland

By DINA MISHEV

Special to The Washington Post

Plovdiv, a city built on six hills rising from the plains between the Balkan and Rhodope Mountains, is Bulgaria's first European Capital of Culture, an annual designation given by the European Commission to highlight the diversity of arts and culture. It is one of the oldest continually inhabited cities on the continent.

Walking around it, it's all I can do not to cry in gratitude, wonder and happiness. I am on a family trip that I never expected to happen: my dad, mom, brother and myself visiting the country where my father was born. He lived here until he was 14, when he and several family members fled as the Communist Party grew in influence across the country.

Emotions follow me 125 miles northeast of Plovdiv to Veliko Tarnovo. Here, over Bolyarka heers on a large terrace overlooking the imposing Asenetski Monument — four larger-than-life-sized mounted horsemen around a 30-foot-tall sword — we agree this city should be Bulgaria's next European Capital of Culture.

Veliko Tarnovo was the country's capital for several hundred years and reigned as one of Europe's centers of arts and culture in the Middle Ages. (It's fine to just call it "Tarnovo," which is what most locals do; veliko, which means "great" in Bulgarian, was only added to the city's name in 1965.) Tarnovo was the first Bulgarian city to be written about in National Geographic; a story about it ran in the magazine's October 1907 issue. Its history goes back five millennia and its cobblestoned, red-roofed homes and businesses spill down a steep natural amphitheater created by a sharp bend in the Yantra River.

Growing up, there wasn't much Bulgarian culture in our suburban house, but there was banitsa, a flaky, cheesy traditional Bulgarian pastry, and nightly Bulgarian lessons for my younger brother and myself from my dad. My mom, a Baltimorean whose sweet tooth crossed cultures, never stopped baking the former, but the latter ended one night in second grade when I told my dad, "This is your language, not mine."

When he lived in Bulgaria, my dad never went to Plovdiv or Veliko Tarnovo. His family lived in Perilovets, a farming village in the country's northwestern corner, near its borders with Romania and present-day Serbia.

My dad learned about the long histories of both cities in school, but says the idea of seeing either in person never crossed his mind.

In 2003, when I was in my mid-20s, I spent two weeks in Bulgaria with my dad, but didn't make it much farther from his village than that he had as a kid. On that trip, my initial meeting with every second cousin, family friend and former neighbor who hadn't fled the country (and who didn't speak English) started with them excitedly greeting me in Bulgarian. I smiled in what I hoped was an apologetic manner as my dad explained I had no idea what they had just said.

An argument could be made that my father shouldn't have listened to a 7-year-old comment about language lessons. Still I can imagine "this is your language, not mine" hurting so much that it made sense to wait for me to come back to him when I was interested. Except I never did. By 2003, all I could do was recite the first seven letters of the Cyrillic alphabet.

Every introduction left me



PHOTOS BY DINA MISHEV/For The Washington Post

The author's parents at Hotel Gurko in the former Bulgarian capital of Veliko Tarnovo, which is built on a steep hillside above the Yantra River.

feeling I had led my dad down.

It wasn't until after both my dad and I were several years out from brutal-but-successful treatment for cancer (melanoma for him; breast for me) and he was 82 that I decided I wanted to go back. Fifteen years had passed. A more mature traveler and daughter (although still unable to speak Bulgarian), I instigated the trip. My brother Rob and my mom, neither of whom had been to Bulgaria before, quickly announced they were coming too. "We have to make it the ultimate homecoming for dad — to share his birthplace and heritage with his American family, all together," my mom said. "It just has to be all of us!"

I had matching gray, long-sleeve T-shirts made. Screen printed on the back, in a nod to our Bulgarian and Baltimorean roots, is a riff on the Guns N' Roses logo: "Hons n' Roses — The Mishevs do Bulgaria." ("Hons" are a very Baltimore thing; Bulgaria is well known for its rose perfume.)

The "Hons n' Roses" tour includes seeing Plovdiv and Tarnovo before ending with a visit to

Perilovets and the family.

Since it is the Capital of Culture, Plovdiv is our first stop. Our first destination in the city is a gatehouse at the entrance to the city's Old Town. Only local residents, business owners and guests at the several boutique hotels here are allowed to drive this UNESCO World Heritage site's narrow, cobbled streets lined with 19th-century homes built in the top-heavy Bulgarian National Revival style.

Checking into the Hotel Evmolpia — Evmolpia was this city's name when it was a Thracian settlement in the Late Bronze Age (1200–500 B.C.) — we're offered local cheese and wine. Archaeological evidence shows that grapes have been grown and wine made in this area for more than 3,000 years. Today, there are about 20 vineyards and wineries within an hour's drive of Plovdiv.

At Hotel Evmolpia, I try a red made from the local grape variety mavrud. It's heavy, and I taste cherries and blackberries.

Adjacent to the Old Town is the formerly derelict, now trendy, Kapana District, a maze of tight, winding streets. (Kapana means "the trap" in Bulgarian.) We quickly get lost, and that's fine. Around one corner there's the Hipster Hostel and an art gallery selling products made from felt.

It is one of my mom's life quests to try as many beers as possible. So when we turn yet another of Kapana's corners and find Cat & Mouse (Kotka i Mishka in Bulgarian), a bar with more than 100 beers from around the world and three of its own brews, we stop.

We settle in with our drinks at an outside table from which we can see three different spray-painted murals, two boutiques selling a mix of locally made clothing and home accessories and three or four art galleries/studios. The businesses are on the ground levels of colorful, two-story buildings with pennant flags strung between them. The

building next to Cat & Mouse is a cafe named Central Perk, styled to look like the cafe of that name from the TV show "Friends." Latte- and espresso-sipping customers speaking French, German, English and Bulgarian relax here in sofas and armchairs.

Bulgarians have a word for this scene: "aylyak." Aylyak is a word taken from Turkish; in that language it means doing nothing or being idle. In Bulgaria, aylyak is slightly different; here it refers to a lifestyle that cultivates and celebrates an easygoing, unhurried attitude (as in, the opposite of farm life). Within Bulgaria, it is generally held that Plovdivians do aylyak best.

While locals love aylyak, it is also blamed for the delay in the refurbishment of Plovdiv's Central Square, which was not finished in time for the Capital of Culture opening ceremony in January. I think it makes more sense to blame the Romans, Macedonians or Thracians, though: It seems you cannot dig a hole in Plovdiv without hitting a ruin from one of these civilizations.

Beneath almost the entire one-mile length of the shopping and pedestrian street Knyaz Alexander I in the center of the city is a Roman stadium built at the beginning of the 2nd century when the city was known as Trimontium. Several sections of it have been excavated, including a seating area you can see in the basement of the clothing store H&M and, in the middle of Dzhumaya Square, colonnades and the stadium's northern end. For better or worse, most of Bulgaria's ruins are eminently accessible and here you can sit in the same seats where, 2,000 years ago, 30,000 people gathered to watch chariot races.

My dad is surprised by the vitality of Plovdiv and its people. "It measures up to a modern European city, but still retains its Bulgarian flavor," he says.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31



Above: Veliko Tarnovo is built above a sharp bend in the Yantra River. Right: The author's father, who was born in Bulgaria but fled the country when he was 14, looks at the Asenetski Monument, which was built in the 1980s to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the uprising that led to the country's liberation.



FROM PAGE 30

He recognizes the vestiges of former Communist rule in its big gray multistory apartment buildings — and likes that newly remodeled buildings — and newly excavated ruins — are the focus.

On our last evening in Plovdiv, my mom, Rob and I walk up to the broad, flat summit of our hill, called Nebet Tepe, to watch the sunset. We also find ruins of dwellings and fortifications that predate the birth of Christ. We're not a selfie family, but standing on the rubble of an ancient wall at the hill's edge, we snap one.

My dad knows more about Veliko Tarnovo's history than Plovdiv's. Most of the latter's ruins were discovered and studied after he fled the country. The former's history is the Bulgarian history he learned in the Perilovs schoolhouse. Tarnovo was the country's capital during the Second Bulgarian Empire (1185-1393) and also at the beginning of the Third Bulgarian Empire in 1878 when Bulgaria won its freedom after almost 500 years of Ottoman rule.

My dad knows the names of some of the 19th-century rebels that Tarnovo's Monument to Hanged Rebels honors for advocating (and fighting for) Bulgarian independence from the Ottoman Empire. The constitution that governed the country when he was born was drafted and signed in the building down the street from our hotel. (Today, this building is the Museum of the Bulgarian Revival and Constituent Assembly.) He tells us about Russian Gen. Isot Gurko, for whom our hotel is named. Gurko's army liberated Veliko Tarnovo from the Ottoman Empire on July 7, 1877. He tells us that the four Asenetsi Monument horsemen liberated Bulgaria from the Byzantine Empire in the 12th century, then ruled it as czars for most of the next century.

Even without my dad's details about the Bulgarian czars who lived in grand palaces on Tzar-ets hill, the view of it from the sky walk, a glass-bottomed viewing platform that stretches out between buildings above the Yantra River, are impressive. Little is left of the palaces but their foundations. A wall built to fortify the hill still stands. Its watchtowers are crenelated and the wall itself is as thick as 12 feet in some places.

Walking down Samovodska Charshiya street, which is home to the studios and galleries of many local artisans, we hear about my dad's favorite cow, Mininkata ("little one"). He says she was famous because she was an award-winning milk producer, and that, because of her, his father, whom my brother and I called "Dedo," went to jail. "The Soviets came for her and Dedo refused to let her go, so they put Dedo in jail and the family had to pay a huge ransom to have him freed," my dad says.

Over our drinks at the Asenetsi Monument, after we've finished making the case for Tarnovo as Bulgaria's next European Capital of Culture, I thank my dad for sharing his history with us and tell him I'm sorry I was such a punk back in second grade.

Thankfully, when it's time to get another round of drinks, the bartender speaks English.

Germany

DIRECTORY

Restaurants

KAISERSLAUTERN

Zimtblüte

asian food

Call 0631-58047 for Pick-Up Orders
Tue-Sun 11am-9pm Mon Closed
Wellersbacher Str. 110
67661 Kaiserslautern



COCKTAIL
CASINO
HAPPY Hour
ENCHI Hoor

Schillerplatz 3-5
67655 Kaiserslautern
0631 3702 7570
www.Enchilada-kaiserslautern.de



Kaiserstr. 117
67661 Kaiserslautern-Einsiedlerhof
0631-99328
www.cantina-mexicana.com



Home Delivery Service! 06371-8497
Fischbachstr. 14689 Lindlar | www.pizzeria-salvatore.com



Hauptstr. 432 55743 Idar-Oberstein
www.restaurant-alte-kaserle.de
06781-28059/36733. Open 7 days a week.
Sam till you leave. Best steaks around!



www.pizza-attack.de

Check online to find
a location closest to you!



BAVARIA



Neue Amberger Straße 39
92655 Grafenwöhr
09641 9369-0 • www.hotelboehm.de



Dieffurter Str. 18 | 92655 Grafenwöhr
0152-58861759
Fr-Sa 10:00-22:00
Caribbean Dishes - Side Selection - Desserts



Anastasia Greek Specialties
Im Markwinkel 1, 92655 Grafenwöhr
09641-929295
www.anastasia-grafenwoehr.de

STUTTGART

Kashmir

authentic
indian cuisine

STUTTGART: Heidenstr. 29 | Phone: 0711-98 98 98
ECHTERDINGEN: Echterdingen Str. 11 | Phone: 0714-98 98 98
LEONBERG: Leonberg Str. 37 | Phone: 0714-98 98 98
Hours: 12:00 - 14:30 and 17:30 - 23:00



Two Locations:
Hohenloherstraße 8
70435 Stuttgart
and
Marienstraße 28
70178 Stuttgart

TRIPLE B • High Quality Burgers
www.beef-burger-brothers.de

olio e pane

OUTLET CITY METZINGEN
Lindstr. 5, 72525 Metzingen
+49 (0)7123 38 11 61

Opening Hours:
Mon - Sat 11:30am - 10pm



Breakfast • Lunch
Daily Special
Coffee & Cake
Homemade Ice Cream
Sunday Breakfast

Turnstr. 6
71088 Holzgerlingen
07031 414777
www.dassidcoffe.de

Opening Times
Mo-Fr 8:30am to 7pm
Sa 9am to 6pm
Sun 9am to 7pm



Lauchstrasse 1 • 71032 Böblingen
T: 07031 98 96 961
www.ehrbar-bb.de
facebook/Ehrbar-Böblingen

RHEIN MAIN



Come Experience Germany's
Finest Beer and Authentic
German Cuisine
www.brauhaus-central.de
Otto Suhr Ring 27
55252 Mainz-Kastel
Tel: 06134-30999
Open daily from 11:00 - 24:00



Open daily
11:30 - 15:00 & 17:30 - 23:30
USD accepted - Master Card/Visa
Tel: 06134- 258928
Uthmann Strasse 8, Mainz-Kostheim



OPEN
Monday - Friday
06:00 - 20:00
Weekends
08:00 - 20:00

Located in the Wiesbaden Main Train Station:
directly after entering the main entrance.

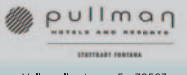
EAT

Hotels



Hotel Forsthaus by Garmisch

Free Breakfast, Family Apartments,
Hot Tub, Sauna, Dogs Welcome,
American/German Owned,
36 EUR/Person, Double Occupancy, Per Night,
Tel: 08824-9120 • Email: hotelforsthaus-oberau.de
VAT Forms accepted! www.forsthaus-oberau.de



Vollmoellerstrasse 5 • 70563
VAIHINGEN • STUTTGART
T: +49 711 730 0 • F: +49 711 730 250 • E: h40@pullman.com
BOOK TODAY 0711 730 2300



LODGE and RESORT

STAY



Hotel Villa

Just 3 Minutes from Rose Barracks
Amberger Str. 9 • 92249 Wilsch
E-Mail: hotel-villa@email.de
Tel.: +49 (0) 9662 42070
www.hotel-villa-wilsch.de

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Pacific

Sengakuji: Resting place of 47 Ronin

Tokyo temple memorializes well-known revenge story of the samurai

By JOSEPH DITZLER
AND CHRISTIAN LOPEZ
Stars and Stripes

Nestled away in the bustling capital of Japan, a temple memorializes an avenging story of loyalty by the fabled Loyal Retainers of Lord Ako, better known as the 47 Ronin.

Built by Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1612, the first shogun of the Edo era, Sengakuji dates to the age of the samurai. Only 29 years after its founding, fire claimed the temple, which was reconstructed in 1641.

A school of Soto Zen, one of three traditional Japanese sects of Buddhism, Sengakuji is the final resting place of the Aiko Roshi — or 47 Ronin, the masterless samurai.

The oft-told story is to Japanese history and culture what the Alamo is to Texas. Starting with a kabuki play not long after the incident, the ronins' story has been replayed on stage, screen and television. (The story is told as part of 1998's "Ronin," starring Robert De Niro, whose character declares that the ronin "chose wrong").

The tale of the 47 Ronin starts with Asano Takumikonomi, the lord of Ako — a region in feudal Japan just west of Kyoto.

The story goes that Asano and two other feudal lords, called daimyo, while preparing a proper reception for imperial envoys from Kyoto, sought advice on etiquette from Kira Kozukenosuke, an imperial retainer and expert on protocol. Accounts vary but according to one, Asano, unlike the other daimyo, offered Kira only a paltry gift (some accounts say bribe) in exchange for his help.

Kira was a bully, and arrogant. He taunted Asano, who held his tongue until finally venting his anger in the audience hall of Edo Castle (now part of the Imperial Palace in Tokyo). On April 21, 1701, Asano pulled his knife and attacked Kira.

Kira was only slightly injured, but to unsheath a weapon in the palace was considered a serious breach. Shogun Tokugawa Tsunayoshi, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica, ordered Asano to commit seppuku, or ritual self-disembowelment, the same day.

The Asano family line was also stripped of its titles and the estate was confiscated. Though custom dictated both parties to the duel be punished, Kira was not.

Believing Asano's sentence was unjust, his chief counselor, Oishi Kuranosuke Yoshitaka, and 46 of Asano's former samurai, the Aiko Roshi, banded together to avenge their fallen lord. They bided their time. On Dec. 14, 1702, the ronin attacked Kira's estate, located in today's Ryok-



CHRISTIAN LOPEZ/Stars and Stripes

The graves of the 47 Ronin inside the Sengakuji temple in Tokyo are arranged in separate sections.

ogu neighborhood of eastern Tokyo, and killed him.

Afterward, they took Kira's head to the museum to present it at Asano's grave. A well on the temple grounds is said to be where the ronin washed the bloody extremity.

Soon after, the ronin surrendered themselves to the shogun, who, although sympathetic to their cause, to uphold the rule of law sentenced them all to death by seppuku, as well.

Approaching the gravesites today, visitors pass the well and mount a staircase leading to a gate. Inside, a vendor sells sticks of incense, small piles of which lay smoldering on stones set before each headstone.

The graves of the Aiko Gishi, or loyal retainers of Lord Ako, are situated in rows inside the small plot beneath the skyscrapers of modern Tokyo.

Even on rainy days, visitors to the gravesites offer prayers, flowers, bottles of water and add to the mounds of incense from which rise a lingering plume of aromatic smoke.

Just before the gate is a small memorial museum, admission 500 yen (about \$4.65), that displays period artifacts, including samurai clothing, weapons and writings, such as a scroll that served as a receipt for Kira's head and a letter from Emperor Meiji praising the ronins' loyalty.

Just across from the museum is an annex with wooden sculptures of each ronin that participated in the mission, and one that didn't, along with the individuals' names, ages, the roles they played and more. Admis-

sion to the museum includes the sculpture hall.

Just outside the two gates leading to the temple courtyard, several gift shops sell souvenirs, like miniature samurai sword letter openers, paper ninja stars, keychains inscribed with the ronins' names and much more.

Not far from the temple — a 10-minute walk — is the site where Yoshitaka and 16 of the band committed seppuku. To reach it, retrace your steps from the temple main entrance to the street leading to the Sengakuji train station. Turn left instead of right to the station and continue up the hill. The walk will take you past the NHK Symphony Orchestra building on your right and Bella's Cupcakes, a nice spot for a snack, on your left.

Just short of the hilltop, diagonally across the street from the Peacock grocery store, take a left at the intersection and continue along the street, past a small coffee shop on the left and the Takayanagi Imperial Residence on the right, to a narrow, tree-shaded street next to an apartment building also on the right.

Follow the side street to the end of the building (time it right and you may encounter a river of children coming or going from a nearby school) and look for a spare archway over a path on the left. Follow the walkway to a locked gate with two windows in the doors. An English sign next to the gate tells what happened there.

ditzler.joseph@stripes.com
Twitter: @JosephDitzler
lopez.christian@stripes.com
Twitter: @CLopez_Stripes



JOSEPH DITZLER/Stars and Stripes

The grave of Oishi Kuranosuke, leader of the 47 Ronin, as seen July 13 inside the Sengakuji temple in Tokyo.

ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

Address: 2-11-1 Takanawa, Minato-ku, Tokyo
The street into the Sengakuji temple is a block west of the Sengakuji train station. Signs posted in English direct visitors to the temple.

TIMES

The temple is open 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. April through September and 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. October through March. The museum's hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., year-round.

COSTS

No charge to enter the temple grounds, including the gravesites. An informational sign at the entrance, near the statue of Oishi Kuranosuke, the ronin leader, explains the significant sites and etiquette on the grounds. Admission to the museum and sculpture hall is 500 yen.

FOOD

The neighborhood around the temple is worth exploring for food options alone. Within walking distance are a ramen shop, the Azu Natural Kitchen, Bella's Cupcakes and several other options, including the Peacock grocery store.

INFORMATION

Online: sengakuji.or.jp/about_sengakuji_en

— Joseph Ditzler
and Christian Lopez



JOSEPH DITZLER/Stars and Stripes

Not far from the Sengakuji train station is the entrance to the Sengakuji temple.



JOSEPH DITZLER/Stars and Stripes

A sign at the temple grounds tells the story of the headwashing well.



JOSEPH DITZLER/Stars and Stripes

Not far from Sengakuji temple is the site in the Takanawa section of Tokyo where Oishi Kuranosuke and 16 of his band committed seppuku.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL



Located about one hour from Orlando, Fla., Tank America puts visitors in the driver's seat, letting them navigate the landscape in a FV433 Abbot military tank. Tactical laser tag is also offered.



By PATRICK CONNOLLY
Orlando Sentinel

There I found myself, in the jungle, in a situation I never thought I'd find myself in: Surrounded by signs of impending danger, sitting in control of a 17-ton tank and covered from head to toe in brown, gooey mud.

But it was by my own free will that I put myself in this situation at Tank America in Melbourne. Although it's not far from the family-friendly theme parks of Orlando, this experience appeals to a different kind of audience — you can probably leave the kids at home for this one.

Co-owner John Kinney said Tank America allows visitors to cross an item off their bucket list.

"Tank America is the only place outside the Army or Marine Corps that you can come and drive one of these tanks around our three-quarter-mile tank trail here," Kinney said. "You get a chance to run through some mud, go over some obstacles, navigate over a 15-foot hill and have a whole bunch of fun."

Tank America isn't the only place to have such an experience, but it is one of the few in the United States. You'd have to travel to Georgia, Minnesota or Texas to have an adventure anywhere close to what you get at the 35-acre Melbourne park.

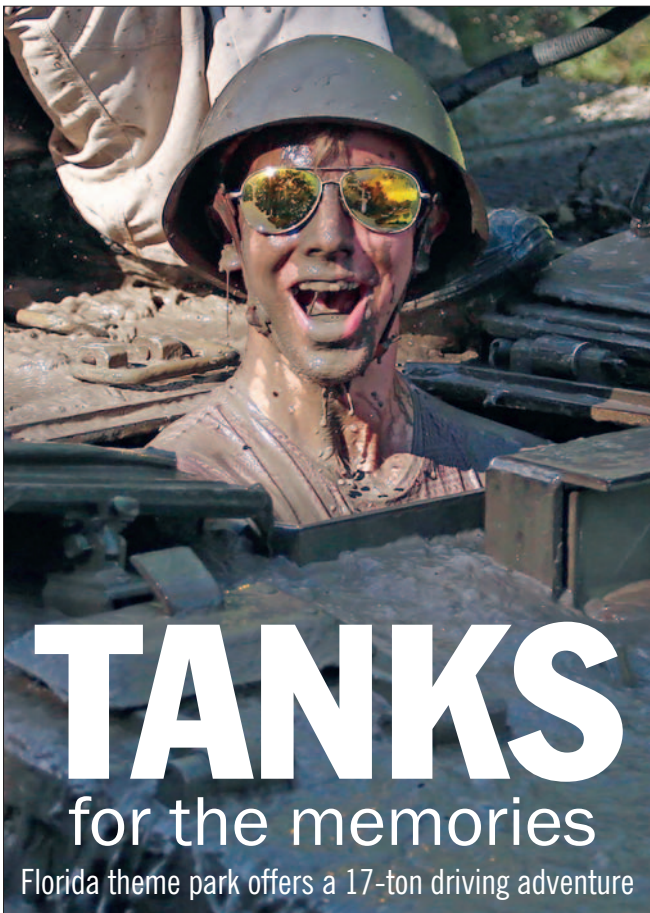
The idea first came from Kinney's business partner, Troy Lotane.

"He said, 'John, did you know that we can buy some tanks?'" Kinney said, recalling a fateful phone conversation with Lotane. "I said, 'Troy, I did not know that. But you've got my attention.'"

Three of the tanks they purchased are a British FV433 Abbot model, which all Tank America participants get to drive for two laps starting with the \$349 "basic tank training" package.

For \$649, visitors can take an additional lap with one of two APCs (armored personnel carrier) "locked up" with the hatch closed, driving while looking through a periscope.

The \$999 "advanced tank" package includes a car crush with the FV433 and a \$1,519 "elite package" includes all of the tank driving experiences, car crush and a shooting experience at Machine Gun America.



PHOTOS BY STEPHEN M. DOWELL, ORLANDO SENTINEL/TNS

Reporter Patrick Connolly gets muddy as he drives a tank at Tank America in Melbourne, Fla., on June 27.

Those looking to spend a little less while still fulfilling their need for adrenaline can opt for a \$25 tactical laser tag session, featuring guns that make a "pop pop" sound and recoil like the real deal.

KNOW & GO

Tank America (9150 Ellis Road, Melbourne, Fla.) is about an hour's drive from Orlando. Tank driving sessions start at \$349 and begin at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. Friday-Sunday. Tactical laser tag starts at \$25 and commences Wednesday-Sunday (check times online). Call 321-241-1122 or visit tankamerica.com.

Most Tank America visitors receive a 45-minute safety briefing before entering the belly of the beast. A Tank America employee named Collin gave me an abbreviated rundown before heading onto the trail.

I was pleasantly surprised to find the Abbot was somewhat intuitive to drive. Basically, you have a large throttle pedal and two sticks that represent

the left and right brakes. Those took some muscle to really pull, but otherwise I felt ready for battle. Or at least for my laps out on the Melbourne site's trail.

During my half-hour trip around the course, I encountered large tires that I ran over with ease, a daunting ascent up Peacock Hill, a four-foot trench and plenty of muddy ruts. The Rolls Royce engine powering my 17-ton beast roared as I conquered obstacle after obstacle.

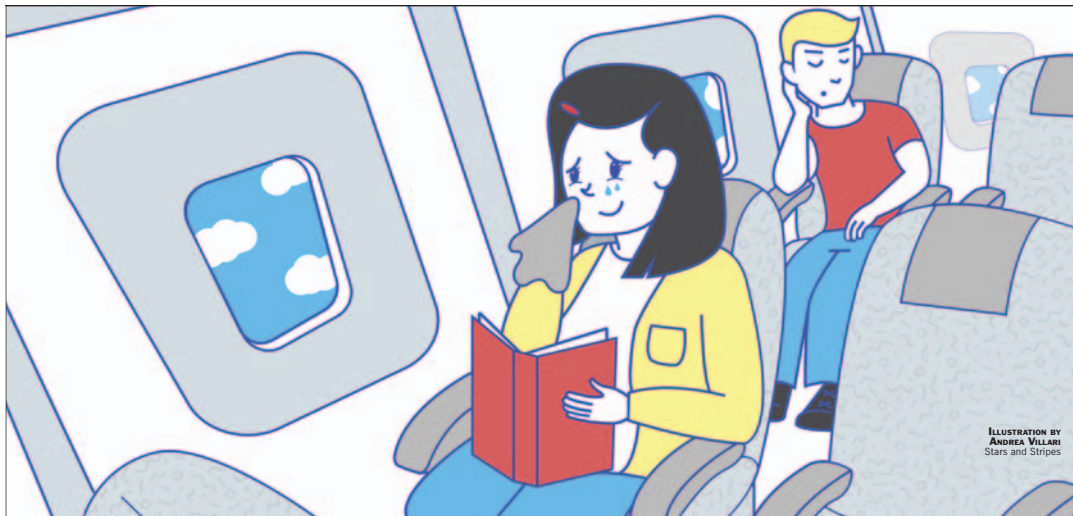
This is the perfect experience for an army enthusiast or anyone looking for a thrilling encounter that differs from what you find on I-Drive in Orlando — or most other places, for that matter.

And by thrilling, I don't mean that the tank ever travels that fast. No, you can't shoot it. But nothing beats the rush of plunging into a deep mud puddle while in control of the FV433 Abbot tank at full throttle.

After that part, make sure you have a spare change of clothes and a towel. The cockpit of the Abbot is very exposed as you plunge into the mud pit. (To be fair, my instructor Collin did ask me beforehand — "How much do you like that shirt?")

Although I was filthy for my drive back to Orlando, I couldn't wipe the smile (or the dirt) off my face. My trip to Tank America felt like a unique, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL



FLYING

HIGH
&
LOW

Emotions and senses go haywire on a plane. Here's why air travel can be such a sensory-jarring experience

BY HANNAH SAMPSON
The Washington Post

When model, cookbook author and unofficial mayor of Twitter Chrissy Teigen wondered aloud on the social media platform whether there is a reason she cries more at movies while on a plane, she tapped into a shared — and apparently emotional — travel experience.

The answer from her followers was an overwhelming “yes”: Followers attested to sobbing over “Deadpool 2,” “Bridget Jones’s Baby,” airline safety videos — you name it. And the reasons hypothesized to explain the emotions were just as varied. It’s the vodka. Or the altitude. Or the lower oxygen levels in the blood. Comedian Joe Randazzo, confessed plane-crier, offered a slightly morbid view: “Some say it’s the air pressure, but I believe it’s because deep down your subconscious knows it might be the last movie you ever see.”

Although there are far more anecdotes than pieces of solid research, psychologists can point to explanations behind what’s been dubbed the “Mile Cry Club.”

Jodi De Luca, a clinical psychologist in Colorado who considers the effect of altitude on emotions one of her areas of interest, says passengers might feel a lack of control over their environment or a sense of anxiety that something bad could happen on the plane. That prompts the brain to produce a stress hormone, which can result in an increased heart rate and faster breathing.

“It’s not just psychological or emotional. It’s also a physical and physiological event. It’s never any one variable. And that’s important,” she says. “We are cognitively, psychologically, emotionally [compromised], and now we’re physiologically compromised. The setup is perfect for an emotional vulnerability.”

Combine that with possible fatigue, plus immobilization, high altitude, reduced oxygen in the blood and dehydration due to dry air, and it’s a wonder everyone isn’t blubbering constantly.

“We could be on that plane watching that movie — it could be funny, it could be a little sad — and suddenly we find ourselves crying uncontrollably or gasping,” De Luca says. “Part of that is because we are limited with regard to the regulation of our emotions in an already-compromised environment.”

She says travelers should consider coping strategies in advance and bring things that are calming for them: a puzzle book, video games, favorite foods or a cozy blanket. “Do things to make that environment, as much as you possibly can, comfortable.”

But tear ducts aren’t the only things that go haywire on planes. Duller taste buds, a hindered sense of smell and pained ears have all been reported.

Research commissioned by German airline Lufthansa showed in 2010 that the threshold for taste and smell increases at the lower pressure of an airline cabin. The perception of salt is reduced by 20% to 30%, the study showed, while sweet flavors were 15% to 20% more difficult to taste.

Charles Spence, a professor of experimental psychol-

ogy at Oxford University, says dry cabin air makes it harder for aromas to travel and dries out the nose. In an article for the *International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science*, he wrote that low air pressure and high levels of background noise in cabins also play a role in passengers’ ability to smell and taste.

Another study by food scientists at Cornell University also showed in 2015 that the noise level on flights tamps down sweet flavors but amps up umami tastes in substances like tomato juice. That gave a fresh explanation to a question Lufthansa had been trying to answer for years: Why were so many fliers ordering tomato juice when the drink isn’t necessarily a hit on the ground?

Armed with this research, airlines have explored ways to optimize offerings for passengers’ altered states. Spence worked with a chef on “rethinking airline food” for Monarch Airlines in 2017.

They came up with a meal box that included ice cream with echinacea, a mochi rice ball to give passengers something to chew on and an umami-rich tea, biscuit and nut bar. Before the idea really took off, though, Monarch went bust.

Other airlines have introduced more umami flavors into their menus, including British Airways. That carrier also worked with Twinnings to create a tea blend that would still taste good at high altitude, and recently announced a Pickering’s gin specially crafted for drinking in the sky.

Outside of mealtimes, just sitting on a plane can be uncomfortable thanks to the surroundings.

According to the World Health Organization, when a plane is at its typical cruising altitude of 36,000 to 40,000 feet, the air pressure in the cabin is equivalent to between 6,000 and 8,000 feet above sea level. The blood carries less oxygen than it would at sea level, a condition known as hypoxia, but the agency says healthy passengers usually tolerate the effects well.

However, there are still irritations. A passenger’s sense of balance can be thrown off by the movement of the plane, leading to motion sickness. And the cool, dry air in the cabin can dry out the eyes, nasal passages and mouth. Background noise is a constant, says Clayton Cowl, chair of the division of preventive, occupational and aerospace medicine at Mayo Clinic in Minnesota.

“There’s a lot of white noise in a plane,” he says. “It’s not at a frequency type that would cause hearing loss, but it certainly is something that over time your senses adapt to.”

The change in cabin pressure can also cause gas in the body to expand, which leads to that familiar pain and feeling of blockage in the ears — as well as reduced hearing.

Despite all the potential for emotional and physical discomfort (and there can be plenty), medical experts say the human body is remarkably resilient.

“For most travelers — the vast, vast majority of travelers — the body’s adaptation to flight is a seamless process, and we all know that most of the time, it’s not a big deal,” Cowl says. “There are a few subtle adaptations that we do when we’re flying that we’re not aware of. The body’s amazing; it does accommodate.”

WEEKEND: TRAVEL



JUSTIN MERRIMAN/Bloomberg

People ride the escalators past a Tyrannosaurus rex on display from the Carnegie Museum of Natural History at the Pittsburgh International Airport.

Terminal tourism on rise as airports return to more relaxed era of security

BY MARY SCHLANGENSTEIN
Bloomberg

Chuck Hughey braves security lines at Pittsburgh International Airport at least once a week. Not to catch a flight, but to get an ice cream cone or cruise a few of the concourses.

Is he nuts? Not at all, he will tell you, just a doting grandfather. He and 3-year-old Cleo spend quality time there, riding the trams between terminals and gliding along the moving walkways.

"It's so convenient, so safe and so secure," Hughey, a 72-year-old retired school superintendent, said after a recent visit on what's called a non-traveler pass. "She loves to look out the big picture window and have a bottle of milk she got from Dunkin' Donuts and sit there and watch airplanes coming and going and the baggage carriers loading up the planes. We have a great time."

Hughey is at the vanguard of a new phenomenon: terminal tourism. Programs adopted or being considered by a number of airports allow people beyond security checkpoints so they can meet arriving relatives or just hang out. It's a bit of a return to the days before the 9/11 terrorist attacks, when airport security was more relaxed and you didn't need a ticket for a flight to get inside.

The programs are taking root as airports expand options to fill passenger dwell time, as it's called — those often mind-numbing hours between when people make it through security and when their flights take off. Now many airports feature live music and art exhibits. There

are spas, microbreweries, playgrounds, gourmet restaurants and wine bars.

Pittsburgh was the first airport to open up to non-travelers, in 2017, and Tampa started doing so last month. Seattle-Tacoma is evaluating a pilot it tested earlier this year and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International, the nation's busiest, may seek approval for a trial run. The idea is under consideration in Detroit and Austin.

The seed was planted in 2006, when the Transportation Security Administration allowed access to restaurants and shops for overnight guests at hotels connected to terminals in Pittsburgh, Detroit and Dallas-Fort Worth. Today, broadening post-security access is an option for any U.S. airport, said Jenny Burke, a TSA spokeswoman.

Some view it as a potential money-maker: officials with the facilities in Atlanta and Detroit figure they might see additional revenue from parking and concessions. A survey of visitors during Seattle-Tacoma's trial showed people stayed an average 2.5 hours — though they spent only an average \$10.29.

At Pittsburgh International, the impetus was popular demand, said Chief Executive Officer Christina Cassotis. Whenever she appeared at public forums, "In the top five questions was always, 'Why can't we go back to the airport and see what's going

on out there?'"

Terminal tourists must have background checks ahead of time and go through the usual TSA security screenings. Each airport will need to continually evaluate security concerns at their location, and weigh those against the benefits of non-traveler access, said Richard Bloom, who teaches aviation security and global intelligence at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. After weighing intelligence information and specific vulnerabilities, the program "might be fine for certain locations and not for others," he said.

Pittsburgh doesn't limit the number of passes, and between 50 and 150 people use them daily. In Tampa, 100 non-travelers are allowed in on Saturdays. The available slots are fully booked through July and August is filling up, said Danny Valentine, an airport spokesman.

The draw? According to Valentine, it's the 69 new shops and restaurants that recently opened, including RunFish Grill, with locally caught seafood on the menu, and Cigar City Brewing. The program was "in response to the desire from the public to try some of these."

During Seattle-Tacoma's six-week experiment, the daily cap was 50 and about 1,100 people took advantage, most of them to surprise incoming passengers

as they disembarked, said Perry Cooper, a spokesman. "People were super excited right off the bat."

Airports work with TSA to determine the best days of the week and times of day to offer access, and how many visitors to allow. It doesn't appear to have created any bottlenecks so far, said Christopher Bidwell, senior vice president of security for Airports Council International-North America. "A lot of that is attributable to the fact it is coordinated well at the local level between the airport operator and the TSA."

There's concern, though, that some facilities just can't handle any more foot traffic.

A non-traveler program "is certainly an appealing prospect" as a revenue generator, said Paul Brown, assistant general manager of commercial development at Atlanta's airport. But the facility's screening checkpoints are straining to handle passengers, with 4% growth expected this year. Brown said a decision won't be made until there's an expansion of screening stations, a proposal awaiting city approval.

In Tampa, "It's been tremendously popular," said Valentine. "Not only with people who want to come out to our shops and restaurants, but people who come out to do planespotting, to accompany a loved one or friend to see them off."

Christina Cassotis

Pittsburgh International Airport Chief Executive Officer

WEEKEND: MUSIC

With a little help from their friends

Lil Nas X issued a new remix of his viral smash 'Old Town Road' as he closes in on Hot 100 history, but Billie Eilish could end up being the 'Bad Guy' if her remix knocks him off

Billie Eilish performs at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles on July 9.

WILLY SANJUAN, INVISION/AP

BY RANDALL ROBERTS
Los Angeles Times

As pop music's summer season hits its stride, the race at the top of Billboard's Hot 100 single chart is generating heat.

If Columbia Records has any say in the matter, at the end of the month Lil Nas X's left-field smash "Old Town Road" will surpass four months at the top of Billboard's Hot 100 singles chart.

It's a marker that only two other songs in history — Mariah Carey's "One Sweet Day" and "Despacito" by Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee — have achieved: 16 weeks at No. 1.

As a signal boost, on July 11 Lil Nas X issued a new remix, this one featuring charismatic rapper Young Thug and viral yodeling tyke Mason Ramsey. The aim: adding enough energy to drive "Old Town Road" toward a historic, chart-topping run of 17 weeks.

The problem? Billie Eilish's summer stunner "Bad Guy" has been hovering near the top spot for nearly as long, and on July 11 the hitmaker dropped her long-rumored Justin Bieber remix of her breakout song. The idea is that, just as country singer Billy Ray Cyrus' remix helped "Old Town Road" achieve ubiquity in the spring, Bieber will push "Bad Guy" to overtake "Old Town Road."

"They're all aiming for the record books," says Lenny Beer, editor in chief of the music-industry trade journal *Hits*. "It doesn't matter if the Billboard charts are right or wrong. It's history that matters."

The dueling tracks highlight what some might call a remix loophole in the Billboard chart system, one that artists have exploited as a way to maintain buzz once a song gains traction on the singles chart.

Billboard will combine the performance data on all three versions of "Old Town Road" — original, original remix and new remix — to determine the song's chart position.

Billboard calculates a song's success through a complex equation that involves tiers adjusted according to format. On-demand streaming services such as Spotify and Apple Music, for example, are weighted more than

ad-supported radio-style platforms such as Pandora. Billboard also factors in terrestrial radio play, YouTube views and more.

Across four months, "Old Town Road" has banked the numbers. During its reign at No. 1, the song blocked A-list releases from Taylor Swift, Ed Sheeran, Post Malone and Shawn Mendes from hitting the top.

It remains to be seen whether the Eilish and Bieber tag-team on "Bad Guy" is charged enough to topple the new "Old Town Road" remix, though. Not only does the new take add in Atlanta hotspot Young Thug — a feature that had long been rumored — but Lil Nas X went a few steps further by tapping meme star Ramsey.

Made famous through a video of him yodeling in an aisle at Walmart, Ramsey and his twangy energy seems designed to get morning radio and TV hosts chatting about "Old Town Road" for a few more crucial weeks.

Musically, the new Bieber version of Eilish's "Bad Guy" is nearly identical, give or take a few sonic tweaks. Vocally, though, Bieber jumps into the new version with a few evenly measured grunts and an add-on verse that turns Eilish's lyrical op-ed on her titular dude into a back-and-forth between her and him.

"Honestly, no agenda at all. Just pure fun," Eilish's spokeswoman said in an email when asked about the new remix. She added that the remix was "timed nicely for her hometown shows in L.A.," the last of which occurred July 11 at the Greek Theatre.

Given the prestige that comes with earning a No. 1, it only makes sense that Eilish's imprints, Interscope and Darkroom, make their play for the top slot now.

As for the timing of the remix of the remix of "Old Town Road"? "That's total counter-programming," remarked an industry insider.

After all, few remember who had the second most popular song of the summer.

Lil Nas X arrives at the BET Awards on June 23 in Los Angeles.

RICHARD SHOTWELL, INVISION/AP



WEEKEND: MUSIC REVIEWS

**BANKS**

III (Harvest Records)

You could call BANKS' first single in a few years steamy—but you'd be off-base. "Gimme" is absolutely erotic, an explicit, hyper-racy club song—maybe a sex-club song?—that announces the return of an artist in complete control. "I been dripping for your love," she sings. "Driving me crazy with the way you whine."

It's the highlight of the appropriately titled "III," BANKS' third album and one that jackhammers into the dark, murky pop vein that other young women like Tove Lo, Meg Myers and Lorde also mine.

Born Jillian Banks, BANKS released her debut album, "Goddess," in 2014, with her follow-up LP, "The Altar," arriving in 2016. Her songs have been featured in the HBO series "Girls" and fueled the opening act for The Weeknd.

"III" finds BANKS co-writing every track and collaborating with some high-level producers, including Buddy Ross (Frank Ocean) and BJ Burton (Bon Iver, Lizzo). It's got highs but also lows, particularly when the production elements overwhelm BANKS' warm and hypnotic vocals.

In addition to "Gimme," the stand-out tracks on the 13-tune album include the sludgy gem "Contaminated" and the bright collaboration with Francis and the Lights' "Look What You're Doing to Me." BANKS' vocal fluttery range is on glorious display in "Propaganda," she's playful in "Alaska" and her voice is barely above a whisper in the exquisite ballad "If We Were Made of Water."

But "Hawaiian Mazes" is overcooked, marred by silly lounge arrangements, "Sawzall" never really gels, and "Stroke" and "Goddess" meander. Lyrically, you might want to pass on the album if you were ever a dissatisfying lover to BANKS. She's got very specific imagery and a keen understanding of narcissists.

The album ends on a wistful note with "What About Love" as BANKS sings softly over orchestral swells. "Maybe if we just rewind the tape?" she asks. "We could grow older."

It's so innocent and hopeful that she even adds the voice of her young niece. It's right then, as the wispy song fits away, that you realize how far you've come with this dynamite artist, who just a few songs before was urgently demanding "Gimme, gimme what I want."

BANKS, at her best, is what you want.

—Mark Kennedy
Associated Press

TychoWeather
(Mom + Pop/Ninja Tune)

California-artist Scott Hansen, better known as Tycho, is back with his fifth studio album "Weather," one that begins much as one might expect.

Opener "Easy" is an instrumental, electronic track in the same vein as his previous work—atmospheric and upbeat. A woman's voice pushes through, but her words are indistinct.

By the second song, though, the deviation from past albums is clear. "Pink & Blue" opens with Saint Sinner's ethereal voice as she sings, "Oh pink and blue, yeah, you know I look good on you."

Hearing vocals comes as a surprise. Tycho's past work has been almost exclusively instrumental, falling on the brighter side of the down-tempo music spectrum. Samples of people speaking, such as a broadcaster giving a report, are used on albums like "Past Is Prologue," but never before has he been accompanied by a vocalist.

On "Weather," the vocal presence only gains strength as the songs continue, giving Hansen's work an entirely new feel. When Sinner is paired with the ambient sound of Hansen's usual electronic mixings, the album releases a tone that is reminiscent of The XX. Her voice is featured on six of the eight tracks, five of which have substantial lyrics—a big shift from Hansen's Grammy-nominated 2016 album, "Epoch."

The change is welcomed. The production value is uncompromised with Sinner's haunting vocals adding another layer to Hansen's unmistakable songwriting and genius production. Hansen, who transformed Tycho in 2014 when he added band members Zac Brown and Rory O'Connor, is showing once again that he's unafraid to tamper with his formula.

It's a fresh sound, one that shows Hansen's intent to weather the storm and keep his fans guessing where his music will take them next.

—Ragan Clark
Associated Press

The Flaming Lips

King's Mouth: Music and Songs (Warner Bros.)

The new album by The Flaming Lips is a head trip—literally.

The ever-evolving, mind-blowing alt-rockers have somehow upped their game with a concept album and accompanying art project that takes us into a giant head. Weird? Yes. Thrilling? Of course. This is the Lips, after all.

"King's Mouth: Music and Songs" is a beautifully crafted psychedelic album that might remind you of early Genesis in its musicianship and ambition. Some songs, like the cinematic "Mother Universe," are instrumental, others have sound effects and the album is narrated by The Clash's Mick Jones.

It traces the life of a giant king, from birth to grave, growing in complexity and abstraction through its 12 tracks. The king dies heroically, and the townsfolk honor him by cutting off his head, dipping it in steel and celebrating his legacy by spending time in it. Does that sound strange? Yes. See above.

"Inside the king's mouth / They entered into the hope of a future that has yet to be lived / Raining down dream upon dream / With love from above," go the lyrics to "Mouth of the King."

None of the dozen songs on the album are predictable, even in the same song. "The Sparrow" morphs from an industrial lullaby to a funky Nine Inch Nails-like dance tune and back again. Other standout tracks include the childhood-evoking "How Many Times" and the funky "Feedaloodum Beedle Dot."

The music parallels frontman Wayne Coyne's immersive art installation of the same name that takes onlookers into a 10-foot-tall chrome head, where they sit on teeth-shaped foam pillows and experience a pulsing light show triggered by the Lips' music. It sounds like peak Flaming Lips.

For anyone not able to get inside, the album will just have to do. And as far as escapist fare, finding yourself inside someone else's head turns out to be a nice vacation in these tough times.

—Mark Kennedy
Associated Press



WEEKEND: BOOKS

Takei recalls family's time in internment camp

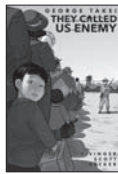
By MICHAEL CAVNA
The Washington Post

“I know what concentration camps are,” George Takei, the actor-activist turned social media rock star, tweeted last month to his nearly 3 million followers. “I was inside two of them, in America. And yes, we are operating such camps again.”

Takei was speaking, of course, of the immigrant detention facilities along the U.S.-Mexico border. Takei has no patience for muddled political semantics. While a small boy, during World War II, the Los Angeles-born Takei and his family were kept behind barbed wire for four years, in what became known as “Japanese internment camps”—another term that he cannot abide. According to the publisher of Takei’s new book, he believes such verbiage incorrectly suggests that Japan ran the camps, or that the U.S. government held exclusively Japanese people and not Japanese Americans like himself.

Takei, still best known for playing Sulu in the Star Trek franchise, has turned his experience into a riveting graphic novel-

memoir. “They Called Us Enemy”—co-written with Justin Eisinger, Steven Scott and artist Harmony Becker—arrives as a necessary testament to what stoked fear and federal racism looked like eight decades ago within America’s own borders.



“They Called Us Enemy” poignantly paints how Takei’s father, a longtime U.S. resident, and Takei’s mother, a Sacramento-born American citizen, suddenly were declared an “alien enemy” by a presidential proclamation that doomed thousands shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Takei wants us to feel, even smell, the inhumane treatment as he relives spring 1942, when his family of five was among those herded like livestock to the Santa Anita racetrack—living in small stalls that reeked of horse manure—before being “tagged” for eventual relocation by train. The pictures are heart-rendering and

the prose is stark as the author begins his schooling in the shadow of guard towers.

On one hand, children are remarkably adaptable, and Takei notes how his youthful lens can make him an unreliable narrator when it comes to his own small adventures: “Childhood memories are especially slippery ... they can often be a misreading of the truth.” (Becker’s monochromatic art depicts that aptly; there is light in her lines, reflecting young George’s playful buoyancy.)

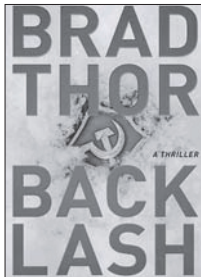
Yet Takei also pulls back to reflect the sweeping scale of the tragedy, as unrecoverable assets are frozen and seized; strict curfews are enforced; and FDR’s infamous Executive Order No. 9066 sends more than 110,000 people of Japanese descent to relocation centers. He details how Japanese immigrants, despite long U.S. residency, had no path to citizenship; some Japanese Americans who entered the military before Pearl Harbor were even forced to surrender their weapons. And he spotlights the sentiment of Sen. Tom Stewart, who says publicly: “There is not a single Japanese in this country who would not stab you in the back.”

Takei’s family is sent to Camp Rohwer in Arkansas, where more than 8,000 people are held, and later to a center in Tule Lake, Calif., after his parents fail to agree to philosophically twisted “loyalty” questions on prisoner questionnaires.

And yet Takei, despite such a bitter experience, holds on to his father’s words. He “taught me the power of American democracy—the people’s democracy,” Takei writes, even if human fallibility can at times mar American ideals. (Takei also makes a point of spotlighting two “outside heroes” during his interment: Quaker missionary Herbert Nicholson and San Francisco lawyer Wayne Collins.)

At 82, Takei has evolved into an increasingly powerful voice for oppressed communities, and “Enemy” finds him at peak moral clarity—an unflinching force in these divisive times.

Young readers would do well to learn his story of a childhood set against a historically racist backdrop, told in clear and unnuanced prose. As our politicians trade semantics, “They Called Us Enemy” calls upon readers to see past the walls, cages and words that divide us.



‘Backlash’

Brad Thor

A Russian plane carrying a prisoner experiences engine trouble and crashes in the woods. It’s enemy territory for the captive, who survives, and now Scot Harvath is in the middle of Russia with no hope of escape.

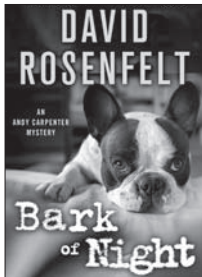
Utilizing his unique set of skills, he goes on the move where he believes he can cross the border into Finland.

In the U.S., his colleagues stumble upon a horrible scene, and evidence suggests that Harvath might be responsible. But he can’t obtain answers from him because he’s disappeared.

Harvath has no way to communicate with his team, no support from the Russians in the area, and he’s being pursued by a ruthless killer who now regrets not killing Harvath right away. Harvath has more on his mind than survival. He’s wounded and angry, and revenge is the strongest motivation of all.

Readers know what to expect in a Thor novel: nonstop action scenes mixed with insight into the world of special ops. This is Harvath’s most personal adventure, and fans and newcomers alike will wonder if this mission will end up being his downfall.

—Jeff Ayers/AP



‘Bark of Night’

David Rosenfelt

Defense attorney Andy Carpenter hates to work. He doesn’t need money because he’s wealthy from a large inheritance. He loves dogs, so when one is in peril, he springs to the rescue.

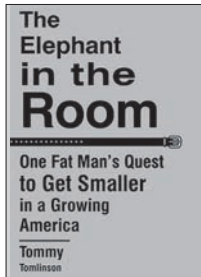
“Bark of Night,” the latest in the Carpenter series, begins when a man pays a veterinarian to euthanize a healthy French bulldog, Truman. Carpenter discovers that the dog’s owner, documentary filmmaker James Haley, was murdered near Carpenter’s home in New Jersey.

The police arrest Joey Gamble, 20, but Carpenter suspects the man who tried to kill Truman may be the true culprit. He decides to defend Gamble, puts Truman in “protective custody” at a dog rescue organization that he operates, and starts his investigation. These actions alarm a group of gangsters—the author’s favorite antagonists—because they fear the attorney could expose their money-making scheme.

A series of local and nationwide murders involving homeless victims follows, leaving Carpenter puzzled.

“Bark of Night” is a treat, especially for those who love thrillers and dogs.

—Waka Tsunoda/AP



‘The Elephant in the Room’

Tommy Tomlinson

At 460 pounds, Tommy Tomlinson is severely obese, but his book is for anyone severely human. It’s an achingly honest window into the lives of those who, quite literally, don’t fit.

He describes his size in unflinching detail and what it means for airplanes, public restrooms, restaurant booths, clothing stores—in other words, everything about the South, music, journalism, sports or, of course, food. He describes it, particularly junk food, in all its empty-calorie drive-through addictiveness, with raw and disarming detail that you blush with him in his failures and like him all the more for sharing them.

When he dives into his family history with food, all deep-dried or heavy with sugar, there’s no ancestral blame for his own habits, just devotion to the people he adores—and, sadly, shame and hatred for himself. His words about his wife overflow with love and appreciation, along with regret for the state of his own health and a desire to do better.

Holly Collier/Willmarth Star Tribune (Minneapolis)



‘Paris, 7 a.m.’

Liza Wieland

In this historical novel, Wieland distills poet Elizabeth Bishop’s formative years into an artful blend of biography and imagination. Her challenge is to echo Bishop’s poetic voice without losing her own, and she manages beautifully.

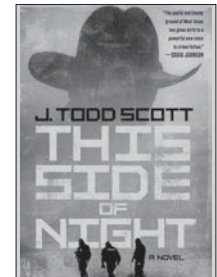
In the 1930s, Bishop is a Vassar College student contemplating the perilous options before her: Will she become a doctor or a poet? Settle down with Robert or pursue Louise?

The heart of the novel explores a period curiously absent from Bishop’s real-life journals, during her sojourn in France in 1937. At first the young poet seems oblivious to the rising tensions preceding World War II as the Nazis make their presence felt outside of Germany.

Somehow, before she knows it, she’s smuggling Jewish babies to Paris. The experience awakens her: “This baby could be me. Or I could be her. Which is it?” Bishop thinks. She summons a line from one of her poems: “I grow but to divide your heart again.”

Readers unfamiliar with Bishop’s poetry will not get a tutorial here.

Maureen McCarthy Star Tribune (Minneapolis)



‘This Side of Night’

J. Todd Scott

In Texas’ Big Bend country, Sheriff Chris Cherry, the protagonist of Scott’s previous two novels, may finally have run into more than he and his smattering of small-town peace officers can handle.

War between Mexican cartels has broken out again over control of the cross-border drug trade, with busloads of student protesters gunned down on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande and bodies of drug mules washing up on Cherry’s side.

To make matters worse, El Paso DEA agent Joe Garrison has doubts about the localities of one of Cherry’s favorite officers, America Reynosa, whose extended family includes a cartel leader. Still worse, Garrison suspects the sheriff in one of Cherry’s neighboring counties is on a cartel payroll.

That’s the premise of “This Side of Night,” a crime novel populated with compelling, well-drawn characters.

Scott’s 20-year career as a DEA agent infuses his work with realism, and his writing chops will make readers wonder why he waited so long to launch his literary career.

—Bruce DeSilva/AP

WEEKEND: TELEVISION & DVD

NEW ON DVD

"Alita: Battle Angel": The film will never stand upon a massive pile of honors, but nor will it be tossed into the garbage bin of failed movie attempts. Any effort that has Robert Rodriguez ("El Mariachi") as director and a screenplay from James Cameron ("Avatar") and Laeta Kalogridis ("Altered Carbon") automatically has some shine. But that is not enough in this case as this massive feature film is simply the most underwhelming production to be released in years.

Efforts to bring the manga character to life look more like the Frankenstein product of bits and pieces from past TV and film projects including "Rollerball," "Ready Player One," "Dark Angel," "Avatar" and "Star Trek: First Contact" — with a little bit of "Pinocchio" tossed in at the last minute. The biggest flaw is that it all is jumbled together to tell a story that never reaches a finale just to ensure a sequel will be made.

The problem with "Alita: Battle Angel" in a metal nutshell is that there's no central core of originality. It's all just a collection of familiar sequences tied at the hip to the unemotional love. Cameron's connection to the project suggested the visuals would be remarkable considering his stunning use of cameras for "Avatar." There's no such quality here, and it's just one more thing that causes "Alita: Battle Angel" to look like so many other films that have come and gone before.



TNS

"Alita: Battle Angel," a cyberpunk sci-fi action film, is now out on DVD.

Also available on DVD: **"Missing Link":** Animated tale of a famous adventurer trying to help the Missing Link find his way to a safe place.

"Rock, Paper, Scissors": A man is haunted by memories of childhood abuse and murder victims while being menaced by the cop who put him away.

"Hellboy": The latest big-screen version of the character from the Dark Horse comics is filled with monsters and mayhem as directed by Neil Marshall.

"Manifest: Season 1": NBC series that follows the 191 passengers on a routine flight that lands after being missing for five years.

"The Doors": Oliver Stone's 1991 film about the rock band that is being released in 4K Ultra HD.

"Universal Horror Collection Volume 2": Includes the films "Murders in the Zoo," "Mad Doctor of Market Street," "The Strange Case of Doctor X" and "The Mad Ghoul."

"The Fate of Lee Khan": The 1973 production from director King Hu is being released on Blu-ray.

"Critters Attack!": Dee Wallace stars in this film based on the films featuring the dangerous critters released in the '80s and '90s.

"Master Z: Ip Man Legacy": Cheung Tin Chi makes a life with his young son in Hong Kong, but it's not long before he's drawn once again to the fight.

—Rick Bentley/Tribune News Service

Leaving a legacy

As 'Orange Is the New Black' winds down, women of color in the cast reflect on show's positive outcomes

By LEANNE ITALIE
Associated Press

From corrupt, brutal overseers to the fraught world of inmate hierarchy to unlikely friendships and romances, "Orange Is the New Black" told deeply rich and complex stories about life for women behind bars that resonated far beyond prison walls.

While it was originally centered on the privileged white character of Piper Chapman (played by Taylor Schilling), the supporting characters — some quirky, some volatile, some comic, some tragic — became the show's breakout stars.

The award-winning Netflix series also became a showcase for actresses of color,

thanks to nuanced storylines with depth that have often proved elusive.

It's no surprise that some of them went on to become the show's biggest draws.

Uzo Aduba won the comedy's only acting Emmys, while Emmy-nominee Laverne Cox, Danielle Brooks, Samira Wiley and Dascha Polanco gave masterful performances that lifted their careers beyond life in Litchfield federal penitentiary.

As the final season winds down with the seventh and final season dropping on Friday, those actresses take a look back at the profound impact the series had on their lives.



Aduba (Suzanne "Crazy Eyes" Warren)

A not-so-lunny thing happened to Uzo Aduba on her way to audition: She was late.

She thought maybe the faux pas was the universe trying to tell her that acting wasn't her destiny. Aduba, 38, had been trying professionally for about 10 years, with small victories, but she quit after her tardiness, thinking maybe a law career was the way to go as her parents, of Nigerian descent, preferred.

That's when the life-changing phone call came. There was bad news: She didn't get the part of track star inmate Janis Watson. But there was also good: She was offered Crazy Eyes instead, though only for a couple of guest appearances. She wore the bantus knits that became the signature style of the character to the audition. Aduba's role was extended and she won two Emmys, two Screen Actors Guild Awards and a Golden Globe.

Now, with her higher profile, she has a goal: "I am trying to tell the stories of the missing, the people and the voices that are missing in the tapestry."

WHAT'S NEXT: Upcoming projects include the film "Beats" and the FX series "Mrs. America."



Cox (Sophia Burset)

The LGBTQ activist didn't quit her day job at the drag spot Lucky Cheng's in Manhattan until after the first season of "Orange" wrapped. Then Laverne Cox made history as the first trans person on the cover of Time magazine. "I just cried," she said. The magazine's story accompanying the cover on the transgender tipping point had her describing her childhood in Mobile, Ala., growing up bullied and harassed for presenting as feminine. She came out as trans years later. Cox has used her star platform to advocate for LGBTQ rights.

"Seven years ago I turned 40 and I had not had the big breakthrough in my acting career that I had wanted. I was in tons of debt. I thought it was time for me to do something else," she said. "I was like, 'I should go back to graduate school' and I bought some GRE study materials."

Then she auditioned for "Orange," and here we are. "Cox was the first openly trans person to be nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award in an acting category and the first to be nominated for any Emmy since 1990."

WHAT'S NEXT: The film "Promising Young Woman" is among her projects.



Wiley (Poussey Washington)

A Litchfield guard, Samira Wiley had been an actor but thought her weight might hold her back, so Dascha Polanco put herself through New York's Hunter College instead, going to school as a teen mother. The Dominican Republic-born Polanco went on to earn a bachelor's in psychology and worked in a hospital as she studied to be a nurse. But over time, she decided to pursue acting.

After minor roles in two TV series, she was cast in "Orange" in 2012. Polanco, who is also a songwriter, now values her versatility as an actor who doesn't fit the Hollywood mold, though the early years were nerve-racking.

"We can all relate to that, not feeling enough. I was very fearful of going out to auditions and being told, well you have to lose weight, well your hair is curly," she said. "You come across this discrimination and this prejudice and you don't realize how much they affect you. ... It's learning how to embrace those scars and how we use it as foundation and not as identity."

WHAT'S NEXT: Wiley appears in the film "BIOS" and is working on a comedy, "Breaking News in Yuba County."



Polanco (Dayanara "Daya" Diaz)

She had dreamed of becoming an actor but thought her weight might hold her back, so Dascha Polanco put herself through New York's Hunter College instead, going to school as a teen mother. The Dominican Republic-born Polanco went on to earn a bachelor's in psychology and worked in a hospital as she studied to be a nurse. But over time, she decided to pursue acting.

After minor roles in two TV series, she was cast in "Orange" in 2012. Polanco, who is also a songwriter, now values her versatility as an actor who doesn't fit the Hollywood mold, though the early years were nerve-racking.

"We can all relate to that, not feeling enough. I was very fearful of going out to auditions and being told, well you have to lose weight, well your hair is curly," she said. "You come across this discrimination and this prejudice and you don't realize how much they affect you. ... It's learning how to embrace those scars and how we use it as foundation and not as identity."

WHAT'S NEXT: She plays Cuccia in the film version of "In the Heights" and is in the film "Gilbert."



Brooks (Tasha "Taystee" Jefferson)

As the brash Taystee, Danielle Brooks showed the way not just for other actors of color, but for women of size.

"Cremated feed, baby, cremated feed," she said, laughing.

Brooks was well on her way doing theater when "Orange" happened after she graduated with a bachelor's from the Juilliard School.

Brooks is also a singer, earning a Tony nomination for Sofia (Oprah's film part) in the 2015 Broadway production of "The Color Purple." She dropped a music video in February for Black History Month featuring herself all glammed up and wet in a bathtub singing "Black Woman," which includes the lyrics:

"The world tells me there is space for me, if I cinch it up and I sew it in, the world tells me it'll be mine, with some lashes on and some lighter eyes."

The song, Brooks told the AP, was "my way of healing myself" while encouraging others to accept who they are. Brooks' mom is a minister and her dad a church deacon. Church taught her a lot about how to present herself to the world and the importance of prioritizing self-love. Now, she wants to "show the industry, look what happens when you give people opportunity."

Brooks, 29, was working as a waitress when her agent got her an audition for "Orange," though initially only two episodes were promised.

"I almost said no to it because I didn't get to read the script and when I saw the scene that I was going to be in I had to be topos. I was like, oh no, no. I'm from South Carolina. I grew up in a very religious household. I was nervous also about playing a stereotype, of the black woman who the world might consider sassy and loud and angry. To put that on TV, I was not sure about it."

She's obviously glad she did.

"It has completely changed my life," Brooks said.

WHAT'S NEXT: She appears in the film "Clemency" and is working on an EP. She's also expecting her first child.

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS

Weighing the risks

Dropping pounds prior to bariatric surgery may lead to complications

By MARI A. SCHAEFER
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Requiring prospective bariatric surgery patients to lose weight before they can undergo the procedure may not be necessary or safe, University of Pennsylvania researchers found in a new study published recently in the journal Obesity Surgery.

The practice of having patients follow a medically supervised weight-loss program before the surgery is rooted in 28-year-old guidelines from the National Institutes of Health, which concluded that clinicians should first determine that patients could not succeed with nonsurgical attempts to drop weight. It was later interpreted to require patients to try dieting before the surgery, researchers found.

"There was little data to support the need for the weight loss requirement," said lead author Colleen Tewksbury, senior research investigator and bariatric program manager with Penn Medicine.

"We wanted to actually measure it," she said.

The researchers looked at data from about 349,000 patients during 2015 to 2017 who had undergone either a sleeve gastrectomy, in which a large part of the stomach is removed, or a Roux-en-Y gastric bypass, which involves creating a small pouch



from the stomach and attaching it directly to the small intestine.

There was little evidence to support the conclusion that weight loss before surgery reduced 30-day complications including readmission, corrective surgeries, death or infections, said Tewksbury.

What they found was that patients may actually do more harm by trying to diet first, she said.

Weight loss before surgery was associated with readmission for abdominal pain and increases in urinary tract and surgical site

infections, researchers found.

The tradition may also be tied to insurance carriers who require weight loss and counseling before surgical treatment.

"If we don't adhere to the third-party payer requirement for prior authorization, patients will not get the surgery regardless of whether it is clinically indicated," Tewksbury said.

But the time spent waiting for patients to achieve a modest weight loss needs to be looked at in the context of putting off the health benefits of having the surgery, Tewksbury said. In

addition, faced with the requirement, some patients change their minds about the surgery, she said.

"Obesity as a whole is considered the second leading cause of death," Tewksbury said. The risk of surgery is less than not seeking treatment, she said.

The American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery has recently come out against the requirement. It stated mandating preoperative weight loss "contributes to patient attrition, causes unnecessary delay of lifesaving treatment, leads to the

progression of life-threatening co-morbid conditions, is unethical, and should be abandoned."

There is almost a systemic bias when it comes to weight, Tewksbury said. Providers do not require the same level of scrutiny or counseling for patients that need a hip or knee replacement, which is an elective procedure to help improve quality of life, she said.

"Overall this is a study that is one step to showing that weight loss before surgery may not be as necessary as we once thought," she said.

Study links small glass of juice or soda a day to increased risk of cancer

By NAJIA PARKER

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Scientists have previously warned against drinking too much soda or juice. Now they believe even one small glass can pose possible dangers, according to a new report.

Researchers from health institutions in France recently conducted a study, published in the British Medical Journal, to determine the association between cancer risk; sugary drinks, such as 100% fruit juice; and artificially sweetened ones, like diet beverages.

To do so, they examined more than 100,000 French adults, who participated in the ongoing French NutriNet-Sante study. The participants, who were followed for about nine years, had an average age of 42 and completed at least two questionnaires about the types of food and drinks they usually consumed. The authors also considered factors, such as age, sex, educational level, family history of cancer, smoking status and physical activity.

After analyzing the results, the team found that just 100 ml of a sugary drink, which is about

a third of a typical can of soda, increased overall cancer risk by 18% and breast cancer risk by 22%.

There was no apparent link between cancer risk and artificially sweetened beverages.

In the study, the team said, "100% fruit juices were also positively associated with the risk of overall cancer. These results need replication in other large-scale prospective studies. They suggest that sugary drinks, which are widely consumed in Western countries, might represent a modifiable risk factor for cancer prevention."

The scientists noted that the assessment was observational and does not show cause and effect. They also acknowledged a few limitations. They didn't explore whether the relationship between cancer and sugary beverages was due to another hidden health issue.

This isn't the first time that sugary drinks have been linked with health issues.

Earlier this year, researchers from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health found sugary drinks were linked to higher risk of early death, especially for women.



WEEKEND: FAMILY

IVF, but at what cost?

It's nearly impossible to estimate final price in advance

BY BRIDGET REED MORAWSKI
Special to The Washington Post

For Elizabeth Cameron, the question was never whether she and her husband, Spencer, would have children. The question was how many.

But after an ectopic pregnancy, her ability to become pregnant without medical intervention was severely limited. Cameron, 32, a special-education teacher living near Philadelphia, was considering the advice of her obstetrician-gynecologist when she heard an unusual contest announcement on her local radio station, Q102 FM.

The prize? A \$15,000 voucher for in vitro fertilization. Hopeful parents should just submit a video.

It had to be a sign, she thought. The day before, Cameron's OB/GYN had informed her that her best chance at conceiving was through in vitro fertilization. But her insurance would cover only preliminary testing and bloodwork; the crucial steps of egg and semen retrieval, injections and embryo implantation would be an out-of-pocket expense for the public school educators.

Now was the chance to potentially afford the treatment.

But could \$15,000 really cover the cost of technologically assisted conception? As many would-be parents have found, it's nearly impossible to know ahead of time what the price will be.

Even on paper, the in vitro fertilization process is complex: Meet with a specialist at a reproductive medicine clinic. If you're a candidate for in vitro fertilization, begin daily injections of multiple hormones timed to your ovulation cycle. Visit the clinic for follow-ups on your ovarian reserve, the quality and quantity of your remaining eggs. Wait for the eggs to mature before beginning the retrieval process.

Then, if any of the eggs are fertilized with the provided semen sample, wait another three to five days before you

doctor can implant the embryos.

The American Pregnancy Association says that a single cycle of IVF can cost as much as \$17,000, although other organizations cite prices between \$10,000 and \$15,000. Most figures, however, tend to exclude the cost of hormones and tests that aren't required but are highly desirable for many would-be parents, such as genetic screenings.

An exact breakdown of the average cost of each step doesn't exist, says Barbara Collura, president of the National Infertility Association, also known as Resolve. Compiling such a breakdown would require an immense allocation of both time and money.

Some websites, such as Fertility IQ, offer verified patient-written evaluations of fertility clinics, but all of its content is locked behind a paywall.

"There is no such thing as a typical couple, so [costs are] going to vary widely," Collura said. "It's based on where they live, who they work for and where they're getting their health insurance from."

Two patients could have dramatically different journeys depending on factors such as age, their general health outside of their reproductive concerns and the number of potentially functional eggs they have. Rarely should a patient expect or budget for just one cycle.

Even with two very similar individuals or couples in terms of age and general health, one may end up requiring more clinic visits, more testing, more expensive medications or more cycles.

In 2017, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention counted 284,385 assisted reproductive technology cycles at reporting U.S. clinics, the majority of which were IVF treatments. These cycles resulted in, according to the CDC, 78,052 live-born infants. (An additional 87,535 cycles were done with the intent to freeze the eggs or embryos.)

The cost of IVF is a topic that those who have undergone treatment say they knew little about before they were confronted with their fertility reality.

Only 16 states require a health insurer to offer individual and group plans that cover some portion of one or more forms of fertility treatment. In the few states that mandate any coverage, the guidelines can be distinctly different. Several states, including New York and Ohio, require insurers to offer health insurance plans that cover little more than diagnostic testing.

Other states, such as Maryland and Rhode Island, cap the amount that an insurer is required to cover at \$100,000. Hawaii requires a five-year history of infertility before coverage is required, years longer than most states' condition of one or two years of continued infertility. Collura says that she knows of families who have moved to a more IVF-friendly state in search of better coverage for treatment.

With any luck, the Camerons won't have to incur any medical debt. After about 150 videos were submitted to the station's website, the couple found out, live on-air, that they had won the contest.

"We can't really put into words what this means to us," said Spencer Cameron, Elizabeth's husband, when they found out that they had won. "This is truly life-changing; it really is."

The combination of the voucher and their insurance has covered everything so far, the couple said. But if they do end up needing to spend more, or need more than just one cycle, it still won't be the end of their journey.

"I think in our minds, we would sell our house if we had to," said Cameron, later adding that they would look at medical loans. "We would sell our house; we would sell our cars. We would do whatever it takes."

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



Military appreciation night makes problems appear minor league

It was running late, as usual. A mini-crisis had erupted on email at home, and typing an emergency response had put me behind schedule. My tires squealed turning past the "Lot Full" sign at the parking lot entrance across from the ballpark. I gave the attendant as patted a look as I could muster, but before I could beg, he waved his hand toward a space that had just opened up.

After parking, I jogged toward the spot where I had agreed to meet my 24-year-old son, Hayden. He had called two weeks prior to tell me that his employer, Raytheon Company, was sponsoring Military Appreciation Night at a Newport Gulls baseball game. Did I want to go with him? I jumped on the rare invitation from my quirky, loner, too-intelligent-for-his-own-good son.

Hayden was there, as promised, standing in front of the green wooden entrance to Cardines Field, one of the local ballparks in the city. The night's New England Collegiate League game was between our own Rhode Island Newport Gulls and the New Bedford Bay Sox of Massachusetts.

We entered the old stadium to find seats among the peanut shell-littered wooden bleachers. The tiny ballpark looked more like a little league field than a place where future pros might play, but I loved the nostalgia of it. As it was Military Appreciation Night, an all-male dressed in red striped pants and a star-studded blue jacket was announcing the names of veterans gathered behind the pitcher's mound. Navy Band Northeast musicians stood nearby in their crackerjack dress whites, their horns glinting in the setting sun. Past first base, four uniformed reservists held flags, ready to parade the colors onto the field for the National Anthem.

While veterans threw first pitches, the seagull-costumed mascot "Gully" interacted with the modest crowd of Monday night spectators, people lined up for hot dogs and young boys fought for spots closest to the Gulls dugout where they could watch the players, gods in their eyes. All college-aged boys hoping to make it to the majors one day, the players spit, yawning, stretched and looked as if they couldn't have cared less.

I, too, wasn't paying much attention. I cared more about my email crisis, and couldn't wait to read the latest string of messages on my phone.

"Mom, you're gonna miss the first batter," Hayden scolded while I was texting friends involved in the drama. I watched the first two innings, glancing clandestinely at the phone in my lap, and wondering if I'd get out of there in time to watch "The Bachelorette."

After the second inning, the Gulls were up 4-0. Hayden made his way down to the concession line for drinks and peanuts, and, of course, I buried my face in my texts.

But then, the speaker crackled with the emcee's voice. Near the third-base line, a bearded man with a prosthetic limb caught my attention. The emcee introduced him as Army Sgt. Brandon Deaton, accompanied by his wife and two small children.

Deaton, the emcee explained, lost his left leg in a road-side explosion in Iraq.

The crowd quieted, and even the players took notice. The emcee announced that he had a surprise for Deaton and his family. From the stands, an all-terrain wheelchair was rolled out, donated by The Independence Fund of Rhode Island. Deaton, stunned, sat in the state-of-the-art device, and drove it onto the pitcher's mound while the crowd looked on.

Then, one by one, people stood up from their phones and peanuts and licorice whips. I stood too, and we all applauded this brave American hero. In that moment, as a fat tear rolled down my cheek, the jumbled priorities of my world were magically reset.

Major crises become bush league annoyances when one considers those who give life and limb to serve in the U.S. military.

Read more of Lisa Smith Molinari's columns at: themeatandpotatoesoflife.com
Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@googlemail.com



istock

WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

ARE WE FINISHED?

BY CAITLIN REID / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Caitlin Reid, 35, is a stay-at-home mother with four young children in Santa Ana, Calif. She says, "When I'm not herding cats, you can find me playing Chopin on the piano or dancing to the Beatles in my kitchen." The inspiration for this puzzle was 89-Across. Her favorite theme entry is the last one she thought of — 23-Across. This is Caitlin's fourth crossword for The Times and her first Sunday. — W.S.

ACROSS

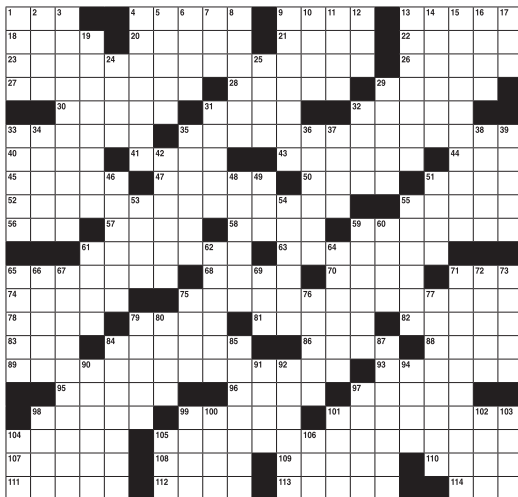
- 1 Knock
- 4 Amped
- 9 Racket
- 13 Chocolate component
- 18 Humans' closest relatives
- 20 Alternative sweetener source
- 21 Trendy superfood
- 22 Coral formation
- 23 "Should I not use my oven clock?"
- 26 "My turn! My turn!"
- 27 What bankers and prospectors both seek
- 28 Sends a Dear John letter
- 29 Arm and a leg
- 30 Sopranos Fleming
- 31 Numerical prefix from the Greek for "monster"
- 32 Gloria, in the animated "Madagascar" films
- 33 Scrubs
- 35 The "Iliad" and the "Odyssey"?
- 40 ____ yu
- 41 Some spicy fare
- 43 Father of Zeus
- 44 Composer of "The Microsoft Sound," which ironically, he wrote on a Mac
- 45 President—
- 47 Its calendar begins in A.D. 622
- 50 Members of a flock
- 51 Put up
- 52 Give a ride to an Indiana hooper?
- 55 Bargain-priced
- 56 New Year abroad
- 57 Teacher of the drama
- 58 Orange juice option
- 59 "I can't take this anymore!"
- 61 The Kremlin, e.g.
- 63 "____ in the Underworld" (Offenbach opera)
- 65 Show impatience with as an envelope
- 68 "Cool beans!"
- 70 ____ health
- 71 Pope's "____ on Solitude"
- 74 Shared spirit
- 75 Printer's low-ink alert?
- 78 How balloons are priced?
- 79 Round product with a wax wrapper
- 81 Unwanted looks
- 82 Less outgoing
- 83 Bygone monitor, for short
- 84 What no single speaker is capable of
- 86 Offerings in a bridal registry
- 88 Cause of an R rating
- 89 What a plumber did for a clogged drain?

DOWN

- 93 Given a yellow card, say
- 95 Top of the Special Forces?
- 96 Little dippers?
- 97 Relish
- 98 Like a Tour de France rider on Day 20 vis-à-vis Day 10
- 99 Classical personification of ideal human beauty
- 101 Overlord, for the Battle of Normandy
- 104 Superspy quiz question
- 105 World's shortest-reigning monarch?
- 107 Sphere of influence
- 108 Tweak, in a way
- 109 In no way reticent
- 110 Sketch out
- 111 Tries
- 112 Flossam and Jetsam, in "The Little Mermaid"
- 113 Really like
- 114 Sign of a packed house
- 1 Bust
- 2 Locale for a shrine
- 3 Personal favorite on an agenda
- 4 Least taxing
- 5 Colorful stone in a brooch
- 6 Flaps one's gums
- 7 Actress Mendes
- 8 What strawberries become as they ripen

COVER-UP

- 9 Cover-up for a robbery?
- 10 Notoriously hard-to-define aesthetic style
- 11 Servings from a tap
- 12 La Baitique, e.g.
- 13 Big figures in 47-Across
- 14 Back to the original speed, in music
- 15 They usually include drinks
- 16 Relief
- 17 ____ Miss
- 19 Sole supporter?
- 24 "____ She Lovely" (Stevie Wonder song)
- 25 Neighbor of an Armenian
- 29 Some prom rentals
- 31 Scenic fabric
- 32 Improve gradually, say
- 33 Doing well (at)
- 34 Give a false impression of
- 35 Got taken for a ride
- 36 Unsolicited mentions online, in the press, etc.
- 37 "Meeeeeceeeeow!"
- 38 It makes you yawn
- 39 Shelfmate of Webster
- 42 One who gets take-out orders?
- 46 Subject of an annual festival in Holland, Mich.
- 48 Mini-program
- 49 Egyptian ____ (cat)
- 51 Derbies, e.g.



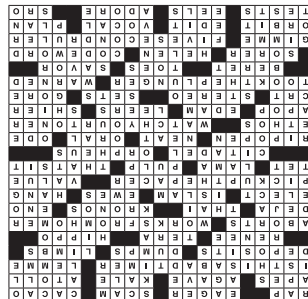
- 53 Spread out at a banquet?
- 54 Attire
- 55 Parts of a gymnastics routine
- 59 Calculation for an aerospace engineer
- 60 When doubled, "I agree!"
- 61 Alternative to a condo
- 62 Certain finish
- 64 Comparative to a wedding vow
- 65 Flinch or twitch, say
- 66 Computer guru, informally
- 67 Pops up in a flash?
- 69 Common sports injury site, briefly
- 71 Piquant bakery offerings
- 72 John who pioneered the steel plow
- 73 Messed up
- 75 Get bent
- 76 Green lights, so to speak
- 77 "Stop being such a baby!"
- 79 Old dentist's supply
- 80 Ingredient in insect repellent
- 84 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.
- 85 Powerpoins?
- 87 Envelop in a blanket
- 90 "It's Not Easy Bein' Green" crooner
- 91 Oppalites of 76-Down
- 92 Posades des Nations locale
- 94 Say for certain
- 97 Echolocation method
- 98 Bull, e.g.
- 99 Half of a children's game
- 100 Dastard's doings
- 101 Popular 2017 Pixar film set in Mexico
- 102 "Caboose"
- 104 Hit 2010s HBO series, familiarly
- 105 Late ____
- 106 Fish-taco fish

GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and visit gunstonstreet.com.

RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



STARS & STRIPES 15 YEARS IN AFGHANISTAN

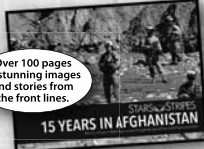


The story of the U.S. military's role in Afghanistan, as seen through the eyes of Stars and Stripes journalists covering America's longest war.

Only \$14.99 with Free Shipping

ORDER NOW at www.stripesstore.com

Over 100 pages of stunning images and stories from the front lines



FACES

Ready to remember

Musician Crosby finally authorizes documentary, 'Remember My Name'

By LINDSEY BAHR
Associated Press

David Crosby has turned down no fewer than four biopics about his life. None of them captured the scope of his turbulent life.

But he said yes when director A.J. Eaton proposed a documentary. At 77, in relatively poor health yet creating some of the best music of his career, Crosby was ready to talk. And a chance run-in with Cameron Crowe, who has known Crosby since the director was a teen, meant they also had the perfect person to ask the questions.

The film, "David Crosby: Remember My Name," opens in New York and Los Angeles on Friday and is expanding nationwide in the coming weeks. It's a disarmingly revealing portrait of the "guy in Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young who's never had a hit" (his words). He talks candidly about falling out with his band, his unhealthy relationship with Joni Mitchell, his "two or three" heart attacks, learning how to be a rock star from The Beatles, his disdain for Jim Morrison ("a dork"), his addictions, the untimely death of a girlfriend and how his wife Jan loves him "in ways that I didn't love myself."

It wasn't easy going to those uncomfortable places, but it was the only way Crosby and the filmmakers would have it.

"There were definitely times when I said, 'You can't put that in the film,'" Crosby said. "And they'd go, 'Yeah, sure Dave. But we did the best we could do to get you some idea of how I got to here.'"

Crowe said it was an honor to "be the guy to interview him when he was ready to tell his life story." They first met in 1973 or 1974 when Crowe got an assignment to write about Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young.

"Crosby had no idea who I was writing for, didn't care. I was just a guy who had a lot of questions and he had all the time in the world for me," Crowe said. "He answered every question."

They kept in touch over the years, too, and Crowe always worried each time he saw him that it might be the last.

"It's deeply ironic that he's at his most sparking now when he's probably his least healthy," Crowe said. "But he wants to communicate and tell us that 'time is the final currency.'"

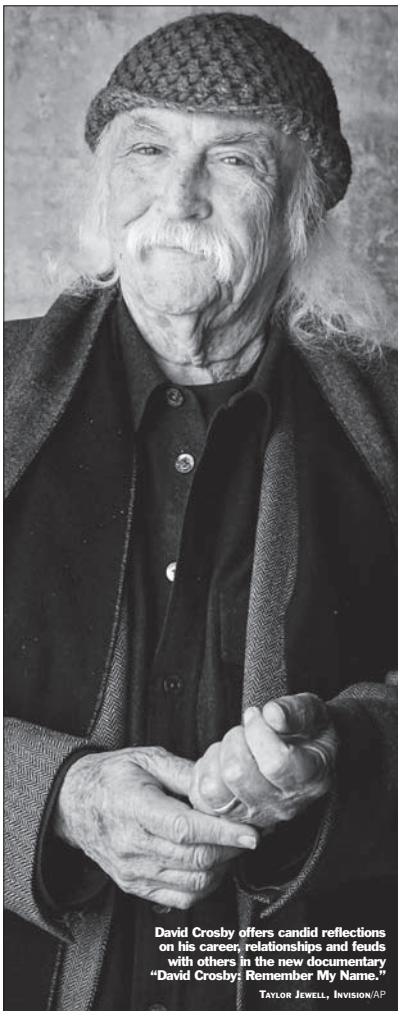
Crosby, known he's in a unique position to have reached this creative apex at this stage in his life. He's currently touring for "Sky Trails," his third original album in less than five years.

"Normally, people's lives don't go this way, to have a sudden resurgence at the end of a career," Crosby said. "I'm going against the flow here.... But why it's happening to me to such an extreme degree and at such a late time? I can't explain it."

He just likes making music and has found collaborators he likes working with.

As for whether he'd eventually allow someone to give him the "Rocketman" or "Bohemian Rhapsody" treatment? Definitely.

"But I don't think you can do it half-assed," he said.



David Crosby offers candid reflections on his career, relationships and feuds with others in the new documentary "David Crosby: Remember My Name."

TAYLOR JEWELL, INVISION/AP

HBO chief: Sorry, fans, no 'Game of Thrones' do-over

Associated Press

The clamor from "Game of Thrones" fans for a do-over of the drama's final season has been in vain.

HBO programming chief Casey Bloys said Wednesday there was no serious consideration to remaking the story that some viewers and critics called disappointing.

There are few downsides to having a hugely popular show like "Game of Thrones," Bloys said, but one is that fans have strong opinions on what would be a satisfying conclusion.

Bloys said during a TV critics' meeting that it comes with the territory, adding that he appreciates fans' passion for the saga based on George R.R. Martin's novels.

"Game of Thrones" received a record-breaking 32 Emmy nominations this month.

In other HBO programming news, Bloys says he's skeptical when looking at the possibility of another season for "Big Little Lies." Bloys said he doesn't see an obvious story to pursue for a third season.

That said, he added, the cast and creators of "Big Little Lies" are extraordinary, and if they're enthusiastic about an approach to a new story line, he'd consider it.

When the series ended Sunday, the five women were seen heading into their California seaside town's police station.

Rapper ASAP Rocky charged with assault in Sweden

A Swedish prosecutor has charged rapper ASAP Rocky with assault over a fight in Stockholm last month.

Prosecutor Daniel Suneson said in a statement Thursday that he filed charges against the artist and two others, "having come to the conclusion that the events in question constitute a crime and despite claims of self-defense and provocation."

The case has drawn the attention of fellow recording artists and U.S. President Donald Trump.

Rocky, a platinum-selling, Grammy-nominated artist whose real name is Rakim Mayers, has been in custody since July 3 as authorities investigate a fight he was allegedly involved in on June 30.

Other news

■ The 76th Venice Film Festival will feature three Netflix productions alongside feature Hollywood titles, embracing the streaming giant again after the Cannes Film Festival excluded it for a second year in a row. Among Venice's 21 competition titles, which were unveiled Thursday in Rome, is the Netflix-produced Panama Papers drama "The Laundromat," starring Meryl Streep and Antonio Banderas. Netflix will also present "Marriage Story" and "The King of Hearts" in its debut of competition. The festival runs Aug. 29 to Sept. 7.

■ Bindi Irwin, the daughter of the late conservationist Steve Irwin, is getting married. She posted Wednesday on social media that longtime boyfriend Chandler Powell proposed Tuesday, on her 21st birthday. Bindi Irwin starred in her own wildlife series as a child. She won season 21 of "Dancing with the Stars."

■ Actress Anne Hathaway, 36, announced Wednesday on Instagram that she and her husband, actor and jewelry designer Adam Shulman, are expecting their second child. She posted a photo of her growing belly with the caption "It's not for a movie." The new baby will join big brother Jonathan, now 3.

Actor Rutger Hauer of 'Blade Runner' fame dies

Associated Press

Dutch film actor Rutger Hauer, who specialized in menacing roles, including a memorable turn as a murderous android in "Blade Runner" opposite Harrison Ford, has died. He was 75.

Hauer's agent, Steve Kenis, said Wednesday the actor died July 19 at his home in the Netherlands.

Hauer's roles included a terrorist in "Nighthawks" with Sylvester Stallone, Cardinal Roark in "Sin City" and an evil corporate executive in "Batman Begins."

He was in the big-budget 1985 fantasy "Ladyhawke," portrayed a menacing hitman who's picked up by a murderer in the Mojave Desert in "The Hitcher" and won a supporting-actor Golden

Globe award in 1988 for "Escape from Sobibor."

Filmmaker Guillermo del Toro in a tweet called Hauer "an intense, deep, genuine and magnetic actor that brought truth, power and beauty to his films."

Gene Simmons, the KISS bassist who starred opposite Hauer in "Wanted: Dead or Alive," described his former co-star as "always a gentleman, kind and compassionate."

In "Blade Runner," Hauer played the murderous replicant Roy Batty on a desperate quest to prolong his artificially shortened life in post-apocalyptic, 21st-century Los Angeles.



Hauer

STARS AND STRIPES.

Max D. Lederer Jr., Publisher
Lt. Col. Sean Kilmeek, Europe commander
Lt. Col. Richard McClintic, Pacific commander
Caroline E. Miller, Europe Business Operations

EDITORIAL

Terry Leonard, Editor
leonard.terry@stripes.com
Robert H. Reid, Senior Managing Editor
reid.robert@stripes.com
Tina Croyley, Managing Editor for Content
croyley.tina@stripes.com
Sean Moores, Managing Editor for Presentation
moores.sean@stripes.com
Joe Gromelski, Managing Editor for Digital
gromelski.joe@stripes.com

BUREAU STAFF

Europe/Mideast

Erik Slavin, Europe & Mideast Bureau Chief
slavin.erik@stripes.com
+49(0)631.3615.9350, DSN (314)583.9350

Pacific

Aaron Kidd, Pacific Bureau Chief
kidd.aaron@stripes.com
+81-452.552.2511 ext. 88380, DSN (315)227.7380

Washington

Joseph Cacioli, Washington Bureau Chief
cacioli.joseph@stripes.com
(+1)202/886-0033
Brian Bowers, Assistant Managing Editor, News
busters.brian@stripes.com

CIRCULATION

Mideast

Robert Reisman, Mideast Circulation Manager
robert.l.reisman.naf@gmail.com
+91-6385.3111, DSN (314)583.9111

Europe

Karen Lewis, Community Engagement Manager
lewis.karen@stripes.com
memberservices@stripes.com
+49(0)631.3615.9090, DSN (314)583.9090

Pacific

Mari Mori, customerhelp@stripes.com
+81-6385.3111, DSN (315)229.3171

CONTACT US

Washington

633 3rd St. NW, Suite 116, Washington, DC 20001-3500
+1-202-465-0023

Reader letters

letters@stripes.com

Additional contacts

stripes.com/contacts

OMBUSDSMAN

Ernie Gates

The Stars and Stripes ombudsman protects the free flow of news and information, reporting any attempts by the military or other authorities to undermine the newspaper's independence. The ombudsman also responds to concerns and questions from readers, and monitors coverage for fairness, accuracy, timeliness and balance. The ombudsman welcomes comments from readers, and can be contacted by email at ombudsman@stripes.com, or by phone at 202.886.0003.

Stars and Stripes (USPS 0417900) is published weekdays (except Dec. 23 and Jan. 1) for 50 cents Monday through Thursday and \$1 on Friday by Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AF 96301-5002. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA. Postmaster: Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AF 96301-5002.

This newspaper is authorized by the Department of Defense for members of the military services overseas. However, the contents of Stars and Stripes are unofficial, and are not to be considered as the official views of, or endorsed by the U.S. government. As a DOD newspaper, Stars and Stripes may be distributed through official channels and use appropriated funds for distribution to remote locations where overseas DOD personnel are located.

The appearance of advertising in this publication does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense or Stars and Stripes of the products or services advertised. Products or services advertised shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user or patron.

© Stars and Stripes 2019

stripes.com

OPINION

How Mueller showcased the obstruction case

By RANDALL D. ELIASON

Special to The Washington Post

Robert Mueller's testimony on Capitol Hill highlighted the divide between the two parts of his investigation: Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election, including possible involvement of members of the Trump campaign, and alleged obstruction of justice. The separate inquiries were covered in two different volumes of Mueller's report and addressed in two different congressional hearings. But Mueller's testimony highlighted another key distinction between the two areas: the role played by the Justice Department policy that a sitting president cannot be indicted. That, in turn, showcased the strength of the obstruction case against the president.

The Justice Department Office of Legal Counsel has issued two opinions stating that it would be unconstitutional to prosecute a sitting president. Many have challenged the analysis and conclusions of these opinions, as well as a Justice Department prosecutor Mueller could not simply disregard them. His report repeatedly made it clear he felt bound by this policy, and he said so again early in his congressional testimony. But that policy had a dramatically different impact on the two different areas of the investigation.

On Russian interference, Mueller's testimony reiterated the key conclusions of his report: There were multiple contacts between Russians and members of the Trump campaign, the Russians believed they would benefit from a Trump victory, the Trump campaign knew about and welcomed the Russian support, and individuals associated with the campaign led to conceal their Russian ties. Many of these contacts would amount to "collusion" as commonly understood. But as Mueller explained, the appropriate criminal law term is conspiracy, and his investigation concluded there was insufficient evidence to establish a criminal conspiracy.

When it came to obstruction of justice, of course, Mueller did not reach a similar conclusion. As he said in the report, "if we



ANDREW HARRIN/AP

Rep. Ken Buck, R-Colo., questions former special counsel Robert Mueller as he testifies before the House Judiciary Committee on Capitol Hill on Wednesday.

had confidence ... the President clearly did not commit obstruction of justice, we would so state. Based on the facts and applicable legal standards, however, we are unable to reach that judgment." Mueller emphasized once again during the hearings that his decision not to make a "traditional prosecutorial judgment" on obstruction was based primarily on the OLC policy about prosecuting a sitting president.

But Wednesday's hearings highlighted the fact that the OLC policy works only in one direction. The policy does not say a president cannot be cleared of criminal allegations, only that he cannot be indicted. When the evidence did not support criminal conspiracy charges, Mueller had no problem stating that conclusion. That he has never made the same statement concerning obstruction has always suggested Mueller believes the evidence of obstruction was sufficient but his hands were tied. His testimony Wednesday only strengthened that impression.

Democrats did an effective job walking Mueller through some of the more compelling evidence of obstruction contained in

the report. But some of the most revealing questioning on obstruction came, presumably unwittingly, from a Republican. Rep. Ken Buck, of Colorado, Buck took Mueller through a series of questions contrasting how Mueller's report treats the questions of Russian conspiracy and obstruction of justice. He pointed out that there was insufficient evidence of a crime Mueller had no problem saying so — which makes his refusal to say so regarding obstruction all the more telling.

Buck also had Mueller forcefully confirm that a president could be prosecuted for obstruction of justice once he left office, which was cited in the report as one reason for completing the obstruction inquiry. When Buck was finished, it seemed pretty clear that Mueller's decision not to indict Trump for obstruction was based not on the facts or evidence but strictly on the OLC policy.

During questioning by Rep. Ted Lieu, D-Calif., Mueller even appeared to say he would have indicted President Donald Trump for obstruction had it not been for the OLC policy. This apparent bombshell set off a brief flurry on social media and cable news. But when he began his afternoon testimony before the House Intelligence Committee, Mueller walked back that answer, saying he meant to say only that the OLC policy precluded him from even engaging in the process to reach a conclusion on obstruction.

But, as former Justice Department spokesman Matthew Miller wrote, whether it was a simple mistake or a Freudian slip, Mueller's initial response to Lieu was likely the truth: If Trump were not the president, Mueller would have indicted him for obstruction.

More than 1,000 former federal prosecutors have signed a letter saying anyone other than the president would face obstruction charges for the conduct in Mueller's report. Although Mueller declined to testify whether he agreed with that letter, Wednesday's hearings should leave little doubt about where he would come down.

Randall D. Eliason teaches white-collar criminal law at George Washington University Law School.

Ensure physicians who treat vets are licensed

By REP. MICHAEL CLOUD

Special to Stars and Stripes

How would you like to receive medical care at your local hospital only to find out later your doctor was not licensed to practice medicine?

Would you believe that our veterans have to face this issue when they receive medical care at the Department of Veterans Affairs?

In one heartbreaking case, officials at a VA medical center in Iowa City, Iowa, hired a neurosurgeon despite several malpractice claims on his record and a revoked medical license in the state of Wyoming.

Yet the VA still hired him. In the following months, some of his patients reported complications and one man reportedly died from an infection after four brain surgeries.

Only after USA Today reported this story did the VA move to fire the physician. He ultimately resigned.

This is not an isolated case. A recent report found that some Veterans Health Administration facilities had hired unqualified doctors who had lost their medical licenses, some for reasons like patient neglect or other serious offenses. The main reason unlicensed doctors were permitted to practice was because VHA employees

The main reason unlicensed doctors were permitted to practice was because VHA employees were not properly trained on the resources available to check the status of licenses.

were not properly trained on the resources available to check the status of these licenses.

Online records are readily available and easily accessible for VHA hiring officials. For example, the National Practitioners Database lists the status of all physician medical licenses. When a doctor applies to practice at a VA facility, the first step should be ensuring physicians wishing to care for our veterans are qualified and licensed to practice.

I recently introduced the Improving Confidence in Veterans' Care Act to correct this oversight and help improve veterans' confidence in VA physicians. Unqualified doctors should not be providing care for our veterans, and my bill would make sure that any doctor whose license has been taken away or suspended would not be al-

lowed to practice medicine for the VA.

Requiring regular audits of all the health care providers who are serving veterans through the VA, which my legislation does, would ensure licenses are kept up-to-date. Also, any VA employee who interviews and hires doctors would be required to receive training on how to check and make sure the doctors have valid licenses.

High quality care is directly linked to reliable doctors, but as of now, these simple standards are not law. I am working to change that so that veterans can better rely on the VA for quality care.

In the past, the VA has not lived up to the standard of care our veterans deserve and, while improving the VA has been a priority recently, there is still much work to be done. I will continue working in Congress to build consensus on this issue and garner support for the Improving Confidence in Veterans' Care Act.

The liberty we enjoy in the United States is not without cost. And many of our veterans continue to pay the price with scars they brought back from war. Our nation owes it to our veterans to deliver on the promises we made to them. Because exceptional Americans like our veterans deserve exceptional health care.

Michael Cloud, a Republican, represents Texas' 27th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other state-side syndicates.

Bipartisan spending plan has political payoff for both sides

The Washington Post

President Donald Trump and congressional leaders have struck a bipartisan deal on a two-year federal spending plan, and while all the details are not clear, three big takeaways are.

First, a deal beats no deal. Before the agreement, the government was on its way to shutting out the federal borrowing authority, and, therefore, cash, by September. The agreement avoids the debt default that might have resulted, by extending the federal debt limit through mid-2021. Setting spending caps for all defense and nondefense discretionary programs, totaling about \$1.35 trillion per year through fiscal 2021, the agreement banishes the specter of mandatory across-the-board cuts known as sequestration, as well as the prospect of another government shutdown. In tumultuous political times, these truces provide a welcome measure of stability and predictability. To that minimal extent, the system works.

The second, far less optimistic point is that compromise proved possible only on the basis of the lowest common denominator. Both parties get to spend more on pet priorities without offsetting spending cuts or tax increases. The House, in control of the House and enough Senate seats to mount a filibuster, leveraged a \$27 billion increase for next year in nondefense discretionary programs; the Republicans got \$22 billion more in defense spending and, of course, no new revenue.

Those elevated levels would then apply the year after as well. The White House dropped its earlier demands for \$150 billion in lower spending over 10 years in return for a Democratic promise not to attach policy conditions to appropriations bills, plus a handful of promised savings that don't take effect until 2027.

Those elevated levels would then apply the year after as well. The White House dropped its earlier demands for \$150 billion in lower spending over 10 years in return for a Democratic promise not to attach policy conditions to appropriations bills, plus a handful of promised savings that don't take effect until 2027.

Now, the GOP will campaign in 2020 as the party of debt-financed military spending, while Democrats tout their presidential campaign domestic spending, reinforcing the unhealthy notion that certain functions of the national government belong to this or that party, not everyone.

Which brings us to the deal's third implication. The deal changes the terms under which the next budget battle will take place. When this agreement expires on Sept. 30, 2021, there will be no more budget caps. The 2011 law that created the sequestration threat will be a thing of the past too. The winners in the 2020 election will be that much less inhibited to borrow and spend than they are now.

China, Russia are united by desire to weaken the West

The New York Times

One of the striking warnings in a recent Pentagon white paper on the growing strategic threat from China is that its president, Vladimir Putin, could pull a "reverse



Nixon" and play his own version of the "China card" with the United States, a reference to the former president's strategy of playing those two adversaries against each other.

Until recently, any relationship between Russia and China could largely be dismissed as a marriage of convenience with limited impact on American interests. But since Western nations imposed sanctions on Russia after it invaded Ukraine in 2014, Chinese and Russian authorities have increasingly found common cause, disparaging Western-style democracy and offering themselves as alternatives to America's postwar leadership. Now China and Russia are growing even closer, suggesting a more permanent arrangement that could pose a complex challenge to the United States.

"The world system, and American influence in it, would be completely upended if Moscow and Beijing were to become, closely," John Arquilla, a professor at the Naval Postgraduate School, wrote in the report, to which Defense Department officials and other analysts contributed.

The latest evidence of warming ties was a meeting last month in Moscow at which Putin thanked the Chinese leader, Xi Jinping, for enabling the two countries to do more than \$100 billion worth of trade in 2018, up 30 percent from the previous year, and an implicit rebuke to America's trade standoff with China. The two countries also signed more than two dozen agreements.

Putin and Xi have met almost 30 times since 2013. Russia recently agreed to sell China its latest military technology, including S400 surface-to-air missiles and Su-35 fighter jets.

While China and Russia have conducted joint military exercises intermittently for more than a decade, they began naval maneuvers in the Mediterranean in 2012, and last fall staged what Russia called their biggest war games in decades in eastern Siberia. They plan to hold joint exercises on a regular basis in the future.

With melting ice opening new opportunities for oil and gas exploration, researchers from the two nations recently agreed to open a joint Arctic research center. They often vote alike at the United Nations and have similar positions on Iran and North Korea. Both have become much more active in the Middle East, where Russia is trying to regain its standing as a major power and China is trying to cultivate relations with energy suppliers like Iran.

The Pentagon white paper, and a separate report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, warn that the United States and its allies are not moving fast enough to counter the growing power and China is trying to cultivate relations with energy suppliers like Iran.

The Pentagon white paper, and a separate report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, warn that the United States and its allies are not moving fast enough to counter the growing power and China is trying to cultivate relations with energy suppliers like Iran.

tarian model, China, not Russia, represents by far the greater challenge to American objectives over the long term. That means President Donald Trump is correct to try to establish a sounder relationship with Russia and peel it away from China.

But his approach has been ham-handed and at times even counter to American interests and values. America can't seek warmer relations with a rival power at the price of ignoring its interference in American democracy. Yet even during the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union often made progress in one facet of their relationship while they remained in conflict over other aspects.

It was encouraging that top State Department officials met their Russian counterparts twice in recent weeks, including in Geneva on July 17, although there was no immediate sign that the two sides made any progress on arms control or other major issues.

Given their history and contrasting trajectories, China and Russia may never reach a formal alliance. Still, their shared objectives could increase, further threatening Western interests. America needs to make its democratic allies rather than berate them and project a more confident vision of its political and economic model.

With pay vote, House ignores true cost to low-wage workers

The Orange County (Calif.) Register

On July 18, the House of Representatives voted to raise the national minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2025.

Given the realities of the U.S. Senate and the White House, the vote for all practical purposes amounts to a mere political statement.

But it does serve as a reminder that far too many in elected office are still all too willing to confuse their good intentions with sound public policy. Almost always, the well-intended politician resorts to a top-down government-coercion program, and almost always, the result falls hardest on those least able to endure it.

A recent Congressional Budget Office analysis offers plenty of data to dissuade even the most ardent backer of a higher minimum wage. It won't, but the data is there. The minimum wage law attacks the poorest and least skilled among us. It tells those people not to enter the labor market because their abilities are not worth the hourly wage they'd be paid. Efforts worth \$7.25 an hour (the current federal minimum, since 2009) may be worthwhile to an employer. But more than double that wage, to \$15 an hour, would be a disaster. It would conclude the price is just too high.

Some of the people such a law is intended to help will live a little better, to be sure. The CBO says 1.3 million people will be lifted out of poverty by raising the wage to \$15 an hour.

But look at the debris it scatters. The CBO says if the wage is raised to \$15 an

hour by 2025, as many as 3.7 million people who might otherwise have jobs will not be working. Presumably, some fraction of that number will fall into poverty.

All consumers will pay higher prices for goods and services, as much as businesses can pass along. Businesses will produce fewer goods and services because the cost of production will be higher. The law will cause businesses to seek alternatives, like robotics, to hiring people.

Worse still, real income would rise about \$8 billion for families below the poverty threshold, but will decrease about \$16 billion for those above the poverty line. The net national result would be lower family income.

Now about a distraction in CBO's data. The agency says 1.3 million people — not families, people — would be lifted out of poverty. But everywhere else in the analysis, CBO uses the term "family" as though most people who work in minimum-wage jobs are supporting whole families. Yet 94 percent of people under age 19 are low-wage workers; 30 percent of those over 19 are. About 7 in 10 low-wage workers have not graduated from high school.

So essentially, we are talking about a redistribution law that would lower the aggregate family income, reduce the goods-and-services economy, raise costs for all consumers, kick millions out of the workforce and inefficiently distribute benefits to a targeted class consisting of a fraction of young people without high school diplomas.

Somehow, that's not how it's going to sound on the campaign commercial of the candidate bragging about "courageously standing up to big business." And the people who really do need help can't get a job.

Ky. rejects inherently illegal sanctuary city concept

Bowling Green (Ky.) Daily News

Lawyer newspaper has seen on numerous occasions that any city that titles itself as a so-called sanctuary city is in defiance of federal law and should have all funding cut off until it is in compliance with the law.

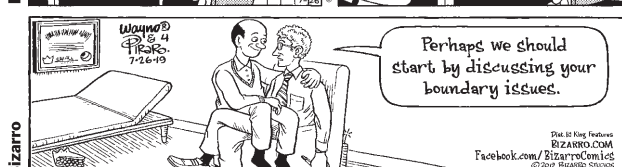
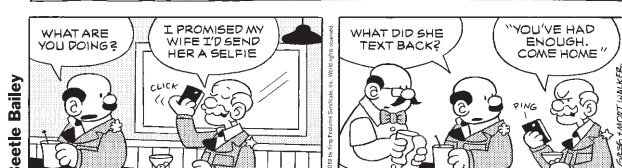
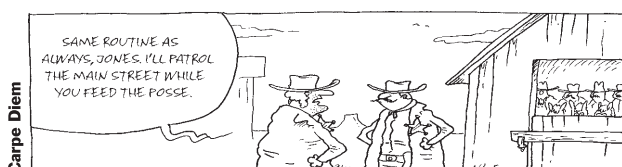
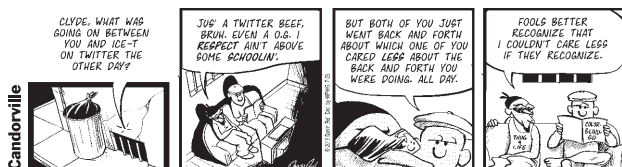
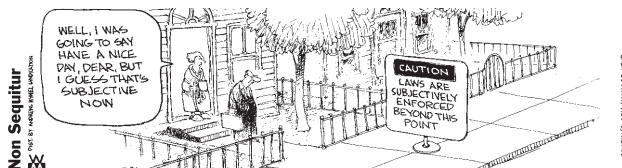
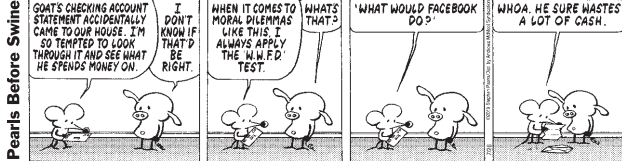
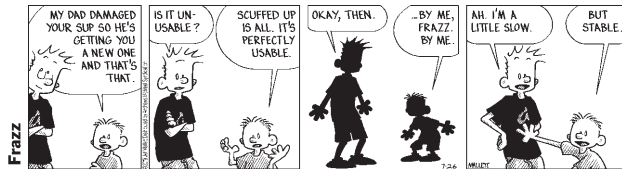
We are still of that opinion because we believe cities that harbor those who break the law by entering our country illegally are rewarding illegal behavior with free government benefits on the taxpayers' dime. Worse, there is documentation that illegal immigrants who have been deported for crimes often slip back into our country and take refuge in these sanctuary cities.

President Donald Trump did the right thing by trying to cut off federal funding to cities in California, Oregon, Washington, Illinois, New York and several other states that allow sanctuary cities to exist. His efforts have been tied up in federal courts since he tried to implement them. Hopefully, when this issue eventually makes its way to the U.S. Supreme Court, justices will rule that these cities are in defiance of federal law and therefore should receive no funding.

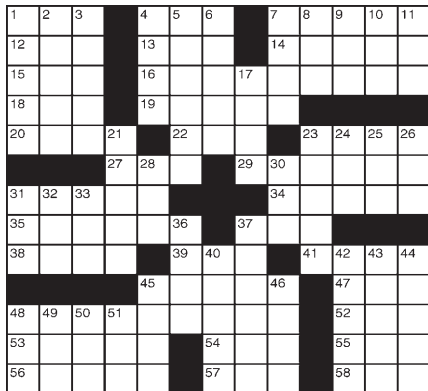
It cannot be said enough that sanctuary cities are not only illegal, they put a huge financial burden on law-abiding citizens. They are insulting to immigrants who have gone through the proper channels and waited years, in many cases, to become legal citizens in the United States.

Thankfully, we live in a state where sanctuary cities don't exist. Louisville was one of roughly two dozen cities investigated by the federal government during a crackdown on sanctuary cities. But the Louisville ordinance, in my opinion, does not make it a sanctuary city, officials with the Department of Justice found.

We support legislation expected to be introduced in Kentucky's next legislative session that would prevent state universities and local governments from enacting sanctuary policies. We urge the legislature to vote into law when it convenes early next year.



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Chest bone
- 4 Alphabet starter
- 7 Trombone part
- 12 Lennon's lady
- 13 Bee follower
- 14 Painter's stand
- 15 Chap
- 16 Relinquished, as a football
- 18 Jargon suffix
- 19 Door sign
- 20 School session
- 22 Archipelago unit (Abbr.)
- 23 Pocket bread
- 27 Hearty brew
- 29 Polar buildup
- 31 Dickens title starter
- 34 Come up
- 35 Fanatic
- 37 Noah's boat
- 38 La Scala solo
- 39 Center
- 41 Big gulp
- 45 Martial arts mercenary
- 47 Unwell
- 48 Unrehearsed
- 52 Roman 52
- 53 Man of steel?
- 54 Green prefix
- 55 Ran into

DOWN

- 1 Thesaurus compiler
- 2 Not vacant
- 3 "Gaslight" actor Charles
- 4 Massage target
- 5 Cap with a propeller
- 6 Small change
- 7 Crystal gazer
- 8 Young bloke
- 9 Equal (Pref.)
- 10 Dict. info
- 11 Sprite
- 17 Sub shop
- 21 Sasha's sister
- 23 Job benefits
- 24 Here, in Dijon
- 25 Prof's helpers
- 26 Mimic
- 28 Actress Salonga of "Miss Saigon"
- 30 Train unit
- 31 "I — Rock"
- 32 Roofing goo
- 33 Blackbird
- 36 Goatee's spot
- 37 Totally hopeless
- 40 Hypnotized
- 42 Mrs. Flintstone
- 43 Fibber's admission
- 44 Razzle-dazzle
- 45 Cager Archibald
- 46 Big fusses
- 48 Sphere
- 49 In favor of
- 50 J. Edgar's org.
- 51 Sweetie

Answer to Previous Puzzle



7-26

CRYPTOQUIP

T BYQ TCYPTQG EXCGOXS
BYMMTQP ZNYZ HJXATMG XA
YOJNYC MTQBXMQ XQ Y
HGQQV Y BXHHGJ NGYS.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF YOU BELIEVE EVERYBODY WHO SAYS THEY'VE FOUND A WATER-WORN RAVINE, I GUESS YOU'RE GULLY-BLE.

Today's Cryptogram: Clues: Cynical, M...

Frazz

Dilbert

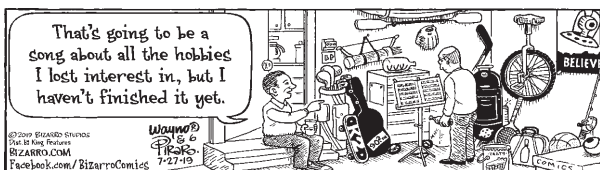
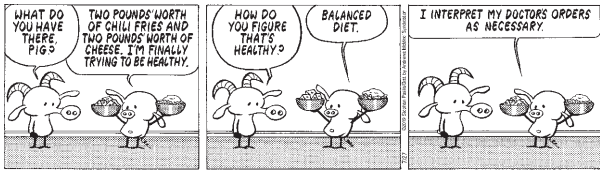
Pearls Before Swine

Non Sequitur

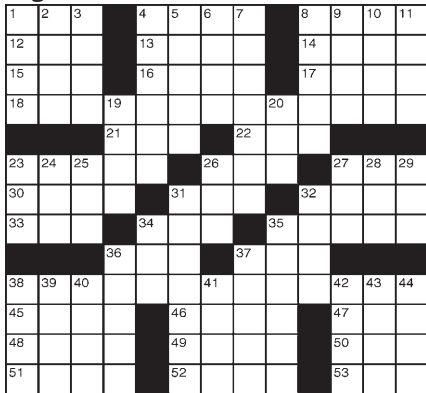
Candorville

Beetle Bailey

Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 "Caught ya!"
- 4 Mexican money
- 8 Halt
- 12 Cry
- 13 On
- 14 Inlet
- 15 Lincoln nickname
- 16 Persian bigwig
- 17 Fresh
- 18 KP duty gadgets
- 21 Doubtful or Dalloway
- 22 Napkin's place
- 23 Mixed metal
- 26 Trench
- 27 Moray, for one
- 30 Close
- 31 Arthur of "Maude"
- 32 "— Karenina"
- 33 Showbiz job
- 34 Cabin component
- 35 Slender woodwinds
- 36 Boxer Norton
- 37 Montmartre Mrs.
- 38 Actors who upstage
- 45 The Big Easy acronym
- 46 Swearword
- 47 Irish actor Stephen
- 48 Computer debut of 1998
- 49 Notion
- 50 Back talk
- 51 Gas container
- 52 X-ray doses
- 53 Mag. staff
- 26 Wooden pin
- 27 Rock's Brian
- 28 Away from WSW
- 29 Vegas opener
- 31 "Good evening, Henri!"
- 32 Genesis shepherd
- 34 Gypsy Rose —
- 35 Nebraska tribe members
- 36 Talent
- 37 Rationed (out)
- 38 Tizzy
- 39 Prolonged sleep
- 40 Panache
- 41 "There!"
- 42 Perry's creator
- 43 Former Nevada senator Harry
- 44 Easy targets

Answer to Previous Puzzle



7-27

CRYPTOQUIP

CGURTH YRFWGXJ ZRLRUGJH
YHROQTGJL AWXOXF XY CGL
PROHT ZRZZRIF PGOW
YIGAHTF: ZRJROHH YRGT.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I CAN IMAGINE SOMEBODY CALLING THAT PROFILE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN ON A PENNY A COPPER HEAD.

Today's Crypptoquip Clue: X equals O

STARS STRIPES®

Unlimited Digital Access

INTRO OFFER!

FOUR WEEKS Web + Mobile

ONLY
99¢

When you subscribe to Stripes Digital Access...

Get exclusive access to innovative digital features, interactive articles, award-winning photography and more. Enjoy unlimited access to the Stripes.com website and our Stars and Stripes mobile apps, all for a low monthly or annual subscription.



Stars and Stripes content features

- Access to Stars and Stripes mobile apps
- Exclusive reports on military matters
- Coverage of all military branches
- Special features on current issues
- Veterans topics
- Retrospectives such as Vietnam at 50
- Archive Photo of the Day
- Unbiased, First Amendment protected reporting from U.S. military bases around the world.

Subscribe Today!



[stripes.com/subscribe](https://www.stripes.com/subscribe)

Stripes

SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market

Dental

902

Transportation

944

AMERICAN DOCTORS & STAFF

SERVICES OFFERED

- family dentistry
- periodontal maintenance
- root canals
- wisdom teeth surgery
- implant surgery
- certified orthodontics
- nitrous oxide



Ramstein Dental Care
06371 406230
Poststrasse 1, 66877 Ramstein
Ramsteindental.com

Wiesbaden Dental Care
0611 9887 2650
Bahnstrasse 14, 65205 Wiesbaden
Wiesbadendental.com



Certified American
Dental Hygienists
TRICARE Preferred Provider



VEHICLE SHIPPING SERVICES

- International Shipping
- Import & Export
- Inland trucking (U.S. & Europe)
- Door to door pick-up/delivery service
- Customs clearance
- All Risk Marine Insurance
- Auto Insurance (Germany only)

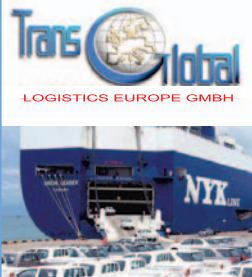
For Further Information Please Contact

GERMANY
Phone: +49-(0)6134-2592730
Toll-free: 0800-CARSHIP (Germany only)
E-Mail: info@transglobal-logistics.de
WEB: www.transglobal-logistics.de

UNITED KINGDOM
+44-(0)1638-515714
enquiries@carshipuk.co.uk
www.carshipuk.co.uk

USA
+1-972-602-1670 Ext. 1701
+1-800-264-8167 (US only)
info@tgal.us
www.tgal.us

For 2nd POV Shipments - Offices / Agencies near Military Installations



Transportation

944

Ship Cars and Containers to and from the USA



OPENING HOURS: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mon - Fri
0800-522-6274 or 800-WSA-SHIP (972-7447)

For a free rate request, please email: info@worldwide-ship.de
Visit our Website: www.worldwide-ship.de

Transportation

944

Vehicle Transport

We can help



We move your world

Contact: Mr. Helio Twachtmann
htwachtmann@neulirch.de

+49 (0) 421 48 94 225 www.interglobalshipping.de

Off Duty? Amuse Yourself!

Concerts, events, TV,
movies, music, video games,
celebrity antics...

Get entertained with...

STARS AND STRIPES

Be the one who really knows what's going on!



Never miss a **Stars and Stripes**.

We report on issues that affect you the most,
covering military news from
*Capitol Hill to Europe, Pacific, the
Middle East and the Pentagon.*

No one covers the bases the way we do.

Wherever you need us, however you read us:

Stars and Stripes is always for you.

STARS AND STRIPES


In print • Online at stripes.com • Mobile for Android, iPhone & iPad

FREE AD Guidelines:

- Free ads are available only DOD ID Card holders selling personal merchandise.
- Ads may contain up to 32 words. All Ads must contain price and contact information. No websites will be accepted in Free ads.
- Stars and Stripes reserves the right to re-classify, rewrite and reject any ads.

STARS AND STRIPES. CLASSIFIED

Go to stars.com to place your free ad. *Sell fast! Buy fast*

When you see this  camera icon go to stars.com to view the uploaded photo.

	EUROPE	MIDDLE EAST	PACIFIC
Advertising	Kristi Kimmel kimmel.kristi@stars.com +49(0)631.3615-9013 DSN 314.583.9013	Kristi Kimmel kimmel.kristi@stars.com +49(0)631.3615-9013 DSN 314.583.9013	Ichiro Katayanagi CustomerHelp@stars.com +81(3) 6385.3267 DSN 315.229.3267
Circulation	Van Rowell rowell.van@stars.com +49(0)631.3615-9111 DSN 314.583.9111	Robert Reismann reismann.robert@stars.com +49(0)631.3615-9150 DSN 314.583.9150	Mari Matsumoto SSPCirculation@stars.com +81(3) 6385.3171 DSN 315.229.3171
Reader Letters	letters@stars.com	letters@stars.com	letters@stars.com

Classifieds EUROPE

For information on Commercial Rates: CIV: 0631-3615-9012 or DSN: 583-9012

Announcements 040	Automotive 140	Autos for Sale - Germany 142	Entertainment 450
--------------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------------------	--------------------------

SCAM FADS

Classifieds scams can target both sellers and buyers with classified advertisements.

Be aware of the common red flags.

Some of the latest Scam fads are:

- Vehicle buyers wanting to buy sight unseen and have the vehicle shipped through an agent using paypal.
- People saying Free Dog (different breeds) for adoption.

SELLER BEWARE

Individuals placing classified advertising should use discretion in concluding the sale of their property. Not all potential buyers are reputable or honest. Stars and Stripes suggests that you take precautions to ensure that potential buyers are reputable and will be able to fulfill the terms of the sale. Stars and Stripes is not liable for the contractual relationship between sellers and buyers of merchandise advertised in the newspaper or on the web site.

Auto - Quality Pre-owned US SPEC Vehicles
www.vilseckmilitaryautosales.com
Free Europe-wide delivery CD

Education 430

Certified teachers needed
Inquire Kidd Learning Center
kg.mackendbach@gmail.com

Brent Marx new CD "You're the Light"

Country/Rock/easy listening songs for Parties, travel, home and bonfires.

Available now at Amazon.de iTunes, iCloud, etc.

50% of all proceeds are donated to the National Wounded Warrior Center.


Off Duty? Amuse Yourself!

Concerts, events, TV, movies, music, video games, celebrity antics...

Get entertained with...

STARS AND STRIPES WEEKEND EDITION
Out Every Friday

Are you in the picture?



Reading Stars and Stripes gives you a better handle on issues that affect you most.

No one covers the bases the way we do.

STARS AND STRIPES.

In print • Online at stars.com • Mobile for Android, iPhone & iPad

Classifieds PACIFIC

PacificClassifieds@stars.com JAPAN DSN: 229 3276 Civ: 03-6385 3276 OKINAWA DSN: 645-7418 Civ: 098-893-0292
KOREA DSN: 721-7146 Civ: 82-2-2270-7146 FROM USA Overseas: 011-81-3-6385-3276

Jobs Offered 630

GOOVER ENGLISH SCHOOL
3500YEN/HOUR SEEKING
TEACHERS. We seek experienced Native English teachers without strong accents who live on US Military bases in Japan. Please Web site provides more information. APPLY NOW! <http://www.goover.co.jp/english/>
042-727-8508

Are you in the picture?

Reading Stars and Stripes gives you a better handle on issues that affect you most.

No one covers the bases the way we do.

STARS AND STRIPES.

In print • Online at stars.com
Mobile for Android, iPhone & iPad

STARS AND STRIPES. Relocation Guide



To advertise in the next Relocation Guide, reach out to Michael Davidson at davidson.michael@stars.com or call 202-886-0014.

RELOCATING TO HAMPTON ROADS, VA?

Ready Services for Those Who Serve!
Funerals, Sales, Rentals, Prep/Mgmt


ERIC GARDNER can speak
ASSOC. BROKER/REALTOR, CRS, DR, ABR

MILITARY RELOCATION SPECIALIST

Call: (757) 805-6235
EricGardner@remax.net
www.FixMyHomes.com

RE/MAX Alliance
1010 Commonwealth Blvd., Norfolk, VA 23502

OVER \$50K in VET REWARDS 2017/18



Want a better picture?

You'll get one – just by reading Stars and Stripes military news coverage.

In print • Online at stars.com • Mobile for Android, iPhone & iPad

No one covers the bases the way we do.

STARS AND STRIPES.

However you read us, wherever you need us.

Round-the-world news for America's military.

Stripes.com supplies constant updates, on news of interest — including reports from our overseas military bases in Europe, Pacific, Southwest Asia and the Mideast, and coverage of the Pentagon and Capitol Hill. Also available on mobile apps for Android smartphones and as an iOS app for both iPhone and iPad.

STARS AND STRIPES.
Mobile • Online • Print

Get the news
that matters to you,
from the source you trust.



Daily Headlines | Veterans News | Military History | and more

Sign up now for Stars and Stripes FREE eNewsletters

STARS AND STRIPES. [stripes.com/newsletters](https://www.stripes.com/newsletters)

Available Now

STARS  STRIPES®

Presents

FORCE FOR HIRE

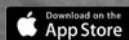
A STARS AND STRIPES PODCAST

A new podcast from the unique perspective only Stars and Stripes can provide.

Join us as we examine the influence of private military contracting on today's armed forces.

Explore the culture, history, myths and facts of the new reality of modern warfare.

Listen Now on



and on **Stripes.com/podcasts**

Hosted by Michelle Harven and
Air Force veteran Desmon Farris.





You've never felt *more* like a local.



Whether you are searching for the best Sunday brunch in Okinawa or a family friendly get away in Germany, one of your **FREE publications** will help you embrace your new home so you can live your new adventure to the fullest.

STARS  STRIPES®

stripes.com/special-publications

PREBOARD

Sports on AFN

Go to the American Forces Network website for the most up-to-date TV schedules. myafn.net

Cycling

Tour de France

Wednesday
17th stage
At Gap, France

A 124.3-mile hilly ride through the Rhine Valley from Pont du Gard to Gap, with a pair of smaller climbs over the second half of the stage.

1. Matteo Trentin, Italy, Mitchelton-Quick-Step, 42:36.

2. Kasper Asgreen, Denmark, Decun-Quick-Step, 37 behind.

3. Greg Van Avermaet, Belgium, CCC Team, 41.

4. Bauke Mollema, Netherlands, Trek-Segafredo, same time.

5. Dylan Teuns, Belgium, Bahrain-Merida, same time.

6. Gorka Izagirre Insausti, Spain, Astana Pro Team, same time.

7. Daniel Oss, Italy, Bora-Hansgrohe, 44.

8. Pierre Luc Perichon, France, Cofidis Solutions Credits, 50.

9. Taneli Skujins, Latvia, Trek-Segafredo, same time.

10. Edvaldo Basso, Spain, Cofidis Solutions Credits, 55.

11. Simon Clarke, Australia, EF Education First, 56.

12. Lukas Ploberger, Austria, Bora-Hansgrohe, same time.

13. Edvaldo Basso, Norway, Dimension Data, 1:26.

14. Geraint Thomas, Laengen, Norway, UAE Team Emirates, same time.

15. Nairo Quintana, Colombia, UAE Team Emirates, 1:35.

16. Nicolas Roche, Ireland, Team Sunweb, 1:40.

17. Ben King, United States, Dimension Data, 1:41.

18. Jasper Stuyven, Belgium, Trek-Segafredo, same time.

19. Sven Erik Byström, UAE Team Emirates, same time.

20. Xandro Meurisse, Belgium, Wanty-Gobert, same time.

Also

34. Julian Alaphilippe, France, Decun-Quick-Step, 20:10.

35. Geraint Thomas, Britain, Ineos, same time.

36. Egan Bernál, Colombia, Ineos, 2:02.

37. Alejandro Valverde, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

38. Richie Porte, Australia, Trek-Segafredo, same time.

39. Thibaut Pinot, France, Groupama-FDJ, same time.

40. Peter Krišajewski, Netherlands, Jumbo-Visma, same time.

55. Emanuel Buchmann, Germany, Bora-Hansgrohe, same time.

60. Mikkel Lund, Spain, Movistar, same time.

74. Rigoberto Urán Colombia, EF Education First, same time.

87. Yury Raskopov, United States, CCC, same time.

87. Chad Haud, United States, Sunweb, 26:34.

Overall Standings

1. Julian Alaphilippe, France, Decun-Quick-Step, 59:28.

2. Geraint Thomas, Britain, Ineos, 1:01:30.

3. Steven Krišajewski, Netherlands, Jumbo-Visma, 1:01:34.

4. Thibaut Pinot, France, Groupama-FDJ, 1:01:50.

5. Egan Bernál, Colombia, Ineos, 2:02.

6. Emanuel Buchmann, Germany, Bora-Hansgrohe, 2:03.

7. Mikkel Lund, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

8. Alejandro Valverde, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

9. Rigoberto Urán Colombia, EF Education First, 2:03.

10. Richie Porte, Australia, Trek-Segafredo, 2:03.

11. Thibaut Pinot, France, Groupama-FDJ, 2:03.

12. Peter Krišajewski, Netherlands, Jumbo-Visma, 2:03.

13. Emanuel Buchmann, Germany, Bora-Hansgrohe, 2:03.

14. Mikkel Lund, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

15. Alejandro Valverde, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

16. Rigoberto Urán Colombia, EF Education First, 2:03.

17. Yury Raskopov, United States, CCC, 2:03.

18. Chad Haud, United States, Sunweb, 2:03.

19. Steven Krišajewski, Netherlands, Jumbo-Visma, 2:03.

20. Thibaut Pinot, France, Groupama-FDJ, 2:03.

21. Egan Bernál, Colombia, Ineos, 2:03.

22. Emanuel Buchmann, Germany, Bora-Hansgrohe, 2:03.

23. Mikkel Lund, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

24. Alejandro Valverde, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

25. Rigoberto Urán Colombia, EF Education First, 2:03.

26. Yury Raskopov, United States, CCC, 2:03.

27. Chad Haud, United States, Sunweb, 2:03.

28. Steven Krišajewski, Netherlands, Jumbo-Visma, 2:03.

29. Thibaut Pinot, France, Groupama-FDJ, 2:03.

30. Egan Bernál, Colombia, Ineos, 2:03.

31. Emanuel Buchmann, Germany, Bora-Hansgrohe, 2:03.

32. Mikkel Lund, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

33. Alejandro Valverde, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

34. Rigoberto Urán Colombia, EF Education First, 2:03.

35. Yury Raskopov, United States, CCC, 2:03.

36. Chad Haud, United States, Sunweb, 2:03.

37. Steven Krišajewski, Netherlands, Jumbo-Visma, 2:03.

38. Thibaut Pinot, France, Groupama-FDJ, 2:03.

39. Egan Bernál, Colombia, Ineos, 2:03.

40. Emanuel Buchmann, Germany, Bora-Hansgrohe, 2:03.

41. Mikkel Lund, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

42. Alejandro Valverde, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

43. Rigoberto Urán Colombia, EF Education First, 2:03.

44. Yury Raskopov, United States, CCC, 2:03.

45. Chad Haud, United States, Sunweb, 2:03.

46. Steven Krišajewski, Netherlands, Jumbo-Visma, 2:03.

47. Thibaut Pinot, France, Groupama-FDJ, 2:03.

48. Egan Bernál, Colombia, Ineos, 2:03.

49. Emanuel Buchmann, Germany, Bora-Hansgrohe, 2:03.

50. Mikkel Lund, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

51. Alejandro Valverde, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

52. Rigoberto Urán Colombia, EF Education First, 2:03.

53. Yury Raskopov, United States, CCC, 2:03.

54. Chad Haud, United States, Sunweb, 2:03.

55. Steven Krišajewski, Netherlands, Jumbo-Visma, 2:03.

56. Thibaut Pinot, France, Groupama-FDJ, 2:03.

57. Egan Bernál, Colombia, Ineos, 2:03.

58. Emanuel Buchmann, Germany, Bora-Hansgrohe, 2:03.

59. Mikkel Lund, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

60. Alejandro Valverde, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

61. Rigoberto Urán Colombia, EF Education First, 2:03.

62. Yury Raskopov, United States, CCC, 2:03.

63. Chad Haud, United States, Sunweb, 2:03.

64. Steven Krišajewski, Netherlands, Jumbo-Visma, 2:03.

65. Thibaut Pinot, France, Groupama-FDJ, 2:03.

66. Egan Bernál, Colombia, Ineos, 2:03.

67. Emanuel Buchmann, Germany, Bora-Hansgrohe, 2:03.

68. Mikkel Lund, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

69. Alejandro Valverde, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

70. Rigoberto Urán Colombia, EF Education First, 2:03.

71. Yury Raskopov, United States, CCC, 2:03.

72. Chad Haud, United States, Sunweb, 2:03.

73. Steven Krišajewski, Netherlands, Jumbo-Visma, 2:03.

74. Thibaut Pinot, France, Groupama-FDJ, 2:03.

75. Egan Bernál, Colombia, Ineos, 2:03.

76. Emanuel Buchmann, Germany, Bora-Hansgrohe, 2:03.

77. Mikkel Lund, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

78. Alejandro Valverde, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

79. Rigoberto Urán Colombia, EF Education First, 2:03.

80. Yury Raskopov, United States, CCC, 2:03.

81. Chad Haud, United States, Sunweb, 2:03.

82. Steven Krišajewski, Netherlands, Jumbo-Visma, 2:03.

83. Thibaut Pinot, France, Groupama-FDJ, 2:03.

84. Egan Bernál, Colombia, Ineos, 2:03.

85. Emanuel Buchmann, Germany, Bora-Hansgrohe, 2:03.

86. Mikkel Lund, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

87. Alejandro Valverde, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

88. Rigoberto Urán Colombia, EF Education First, 2:03.

89. Yury Raskopov, United States, CCC, 2:03.

90. Chad Haud, United States, Sunweb, 2:03.

91. Steven Krišajewski, Netherlands, Jumbo-Visma, 2:03.

92. Thibaut Pinot, France, Groupama-FDJ, 2:03.

93. Egan Bernál, Colombia, Ineos, 2:03.

94. Emanuel Buchmann, Germany, Bora-Hansgrohe, 2:03.

95. Mikkel Lund, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

96. Alejandro Valverde, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

97. Rigoberto Urán Colombia, EF Education First, 2:03.

98. Yury Raskopov, United States, CCC, 2:03.

99. Chad Haud, United States, Sunweb, 2:03.

100. Steven Krišajewski, Netherlands, Jumbo-Visma, 2:03.

101. Thibaut Pinot, France, Groupama-FDJ, 2:03.

102. Egan Bernál, Colombia, Ineos, 2:03.

103. Emanuel Buchmann, Germany, Bora-Hansgrohe, 2:03.

104. Mikkel Lund, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

105. Alejandro Valverde, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

106. Rigoberto Urán Colombia, EF Education First, 2:03.

107. Yury Raskopov, United States, CCC, 2:03.

108. Chad Haud, United States, Sunweb, 2:03.

109. Steven Krišajewski, Netherlands, Jumbo-Visma, 2:03.

110. Thibaut Pinot, France, Groupama-FDJ, 2:03.

111. Egan Bernál, Colombia, Ineos, 2:03.

112. Emanuel Buchmann, Germany, Bora-Hansgrohe, 2:03.

113. Mikkel Lund, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

114. Alejandro Valverde, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

115. Rigoberto Urán Colombia, EF Education First, 2:03.

116. Yury Raskopov, United States, CCC, 2:03.

117. Chad Haud, United States, Sunweb, 2:03.

118. Steven Krišajewski, Netherlands, Jumbo-Visma, 2:03.

119. Thibaut Pinot, France, Groupama-FDJ, 2:03.

120. Egan Bernál, Colombia, Ineos, 2:03.

121. Emanuel Buchmann, Germany, Bora-Hansgrohe, 2:03.

122. Mikkel Lund, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

123. Alejandro Valverde, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

124. Rigoberto Urán Colombia, EF Education First, 2:03.

125. Yury Raskopov, United States, CCC, 2:03.

126. Chad Haud, United States, Sunweb, 2:03.

127. Steven Krišajewski, Netherlands, Jumbo-Visma, 2:03.

128. Thibaut Pinot, France, Groupama-FDJ, 2:03.

129. Egan Bernál, Colombia, Ineos, 2:03.

130. Emanuel Buchmann, Germany, Bora-Hansgrohe, 2:03.

131. Mikkel Lund, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

132. Alejandro Valverde, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

133. Rigoberto Urán Colombia, EF Education First, 2:03.

134. Yury Raskopov, United States, CCC, 2:03.

135. Chad Haud, United States, Sunweb, 2:03.

136. Steven Krišajewski, Netherlands, Jumbo-Visma, 2:03.

137. Thibaut Pinot, France, Groupama-FDJ, 2:03.

138. Egan Bernál, Colombia, Ineos, 2:03.

139. Emanuel Buchmann, Germany, Bora-Hansgrohe, 2:03.

140. Mikkel Lund, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

141. Alejandro Valverde, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

142. Rigoberto Urán Colombia, EF Education First, 2:03.

143. Yury Raskopov, United States, CCC, 2:03.

144. Chad Haud, United States, Sunweb, 2:03.

145. Steven Krišajewski, Netherlands, Jumbo-Visma, 2:03.

146. Thibaut Pinot, France, Groupama-FDJ, 2:03.

147. Egan Bernál, Colombia, Ineos, 2:03.

148. Emanuel Buchmann, Germany, Bora-Hansgrohe, 2:03.

149. Mikkel Lund, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

150. Alejandro Valverde, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

151. Rigoberto Urán Colombia, EF Education First, 2:03.

152. Yury Raskopov, United States, CCC, 2:03.

153. Chad Haud, United States, Sunweb, 2:03.

154. Steven Krišajewski, Netherlands, Jumbo-Visma, 2:03.

155. Thibaut Pinot, France, Groupama-FDJ, 2:03.

156. Egan Bernál, Colombia, Ineos, 2:03.

157. Emanuel Buchmann, Germany, Bora-Hansgrohe, 2:03.

158. Mikkel Lund, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

159. Alejandro Valverde, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

160. Rigoberto Urán Colombia, EF Education First, 2:03.

161. Yury Raskopov, United States, CCC, 2:03.

162. Chad Haud, United States, Sunweb, 2:03.

163. Steven Krišajewski, Netherlands, Jumbo-Visma, 2:03.

164. Thibaut Pinot, France, Groupama-FDJ, 2:03.

165. Egan Bernál, Colombia, Ineos, 2:03.

166. Emanuel Buchmann, Germany, Bora-Hansgrohe, 2:03.

167. Mikkel Lund, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

168. Alejandro Valverde, Spain, Movistar, 2:03.

169. Rigoberto Urán Colombia, EF Education First, 2:03.

170. Yury Raskopov, United States, CCC, 2:03.

171. Chad Haud, United States, Sunweb, 2:03.

172. Steven Krišajewski, Netherlands, Jumbo-Visma, 2:03.

173. Thibaut Pinot, France, Groupama-FDJ, 2:03.

174. Egan Bernál, Colombia, Ineos, 2:0

ULTIMATE FRISBEE/AUTO RACING



DANIEL NGAI, TORONTO RUSH/AP

New York Empire's Marques Brownlee throws a frisbee in front of a Toronto Rush player during an American Ultimate Disc League game at Varsity Stadium in Toronto. Most professional Ultimate Disc players have second jobs to make ends meet. Brownlee's day job just happens to be more lucrative.

Famous tech YouTuber has side gig: Ultimate Disc pro

By AVERY YANG
Associated Press

NEW ROCHELLE, N.Y. — Professional Ultimate Frisbee players need to have second jobs to make ends meet. Marques Brownlee's day job just happens to be more lucrative than most.

Brownlee, who plays for the New York Empire in the American Ultimate Disc League, is a tech YouTuber. His channel has 8.9 million subscribers, and he makes hundreds of thousands of dollars a year reviewing products and interviewing tech giants like Bill Gates and Elon Musk. His videos average almost 1 million views per day.

In his YouTube bio, Brownlee refers to himself as a geek, tech head and internet personality — but not an athlete. He rarely mentions the sport — usually referred to as just Ultimate — in his videos, but he blocks off ample time for his athletic pursuits. His double life is clearly delineated on his calendar, which he keeps down to the hour, months in advance. YouTube on weekdays. Ultimate on the weekends.

"A lot of the companies I work with, they're not returning my calls or emails on weekends," Brownlee said after a recent playoff win for New York. "So weekends are weekends for Ultimate."

His YouTube career has allowed him to meet fans around the world. And when he's on the field, his day job is the reason he gets recognized.

At a game in Washington, an opponent, Joe Richards, lined up to guard him. Before play restarted, Richards leaned over to say something.

"I started playing Ultimate because of you," Richards said.

Brownlee said he's accustomed to that sort of interaction. He feels a responsibility to use his celebrity to promote Ultimate — a game similar to football that uses a plastic disc instead of an oblong ball. "We're not really doing it for the salary," he said. "This is a promotional thing for the sport."

So far, however, the league hasn't done much to leverage Brownlee's fame.

"I'm not going to say it hasn't been a thought," team owner Barbara Stevens said. "He is a professional player for the New York Empire. That is my requirement for him: to show up at games ready to play Ultimate. I know people think I'm crazy, but I'm not going to change my philosophy."

Brownlee didn't play in undefeated New York's playoff win over Toronto on Sunday at its home field, a tiny football stadium in suburban Westchester County that's also used by Monroe College.

'That's the dream for the sport. Just to share the airtime with all the other sports so that it gets the respect that it deserves.'

Marques Brownlee

YouTube personality and pro Ultimate Frisbee player

Brownlee's extreme long-shot goal would be to play in the Olympics. The International Olympic Committee has recognized Ultimate, but the sport didn't make the shortlist for inclusion in the 2024 Games in Paris, leaving 2028 in Los Angeles as the next possibility.

"That's the dream for the sport," Brownlee said. "Just to share the airtime with all the other sports so that it gets the respect that it deserves."

Brownlee's start in Ultimate was as matter-of-fact as his launch on YouTube — he just signed up. The sport originated in 1968 at his high school, Columbia High School in Maplewood, N.J., and he joined the team with only a Frisbee camp under his belt.

While at that same high school, he frequented YouTube for product reviews, but he found the content unsatisfying and realized there was a deficiency in the market. In 2009, at age 15 and with no formal training, he posted his first video, under the username MKBHD.

Four years later, he topped 1 million subscribers. "Proudest moment on YouTube," he said of the milestone. "It's kind of mind-blowing. I couldn't imagine that many people listening to what you say."

His celebrity has also brought him into contact with mainstream athletes. Kobe Bryant interviewed Brownlee in 2015 for the then-Lakers star's shoe launch. Even then, Brownlee tried to work Ultimate into the conversation.

"[Bryant] just said, like, 'cool,'" Brownlee said with a laugh.

Brownlee's teammates don't quite know what to make of his off-the-field stardom.

"We're all flabbergasted by the success he's been having right now," Empire player Conor Kline said.

Newgarden still in driver's seat for IndyCar title

Four drivers remain close with 5 races to go

There are no slouches in the IndyCar Series, proven each week by the incredibly close competition across the grid. The intensity has given the series yet another tight championship race in the homestretch of its season.

Josef Newgarden dominated at Iowa to pad a fragile lead that Alexander Rossi had trimmed to just four points. Then came a Newgarden rout Saturday night on the oval at Iowa, which gave him breathing room in what is essentially a four-driver title race.

There's Newgarden, winner of four races this season, and the points leader for all but one week.

He is being relentlessly chased by Rossi, winner of two races to date this season and consistently strategizing on how to claim his first IndyCar title.

Simon Pagenaud won the Indianapolis 500 — a race worth double points — to enter the championship picture and he is hanging tough with the front-runners with three wins on the season. Both Newgarden and Pagenaud are former series champions.

The final contender is reigning series champion Scott Dixon, who can't be counted out even at 98 points behind Newgarden. The five-time series champion could have fallen out of the title picture entirely at Iowa, where his Chip Ganassi Racing team hasn't thrived in recent years. Dixon even went a lap off the pace during the race before adjustments and pit strategy allowed him to make a late charge through the field and close in on Newgarden.

"I'm like, 'Scott? Where the hell did he come from?'" Newgarden said after the race.

The runner-up finish gives Dixon a chance with five races remaining this season. The September finale, a return to Laguna Seca in Monterey, Calif., after a 15-year absence, is worth double points. Of the drivers in the championship picture, only Dixon has raced the historic speedway in an Indy car.

Up next, though, is Sunday's stop on the road course at Mid-Ohio, where Rossi won last season. Then comes Pocono, where Rossi also won last year to become a serious title contender.

The lesson Rossi learned in un-

In the Pits



CHARLIE NEIBERGALL/AP

Josef Newgarden celebrates after winning the IndyCar Series race Sunday at Iowa Speedway in Newton, Iowa. It was his fourth win this season.

successfully chasing Dixon last season for the championship was to mitigate the damage on his bad days, and he's successfully done that all season with Andretti Autosport. Now he's applying those practices in a contract year in which other teams are certainly interested in snatching the American away from Andretti while trying to keep Newgarden in reach.

Rossi's sixth-place finish at Iowa was his worst in seven races, a stretch that included three runner-ups, including a breathtaking battle with Pagenaud in the closing laps of the Indy 500.

There wasn't much for him to do at Iowa, where Newgarden won for the second time by leading 245 of the 300 laps. The Tennessee native had not been all that pleased with his car after qualifying third, behind both his Team Penske teammates, but felt comfortable enough around the oval to take control of the race.

"You've got to maximize your weekends that you can. There's a lot of [contenders] still in it," Newgarden said. "If you've got a winning car, we try to win. If we have a fourth-place car, we try to finish fourth. That's what we've been doing. You're going to have those ups and downs. But it's about who rides it out the most even, I think. "We'll see where we tally up at the end."

GOLF

Major reasons to celebrate

From Woods' thrilling Masters victory to Lowry's win, golf delivers solid run

By DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

PORTRUSH, Northern Ireland — Winning the British Open didn't sink in right away for Shane Lowry.

It apparently didn't take long. A celebration that began on the 18th fairway of Royal Portrush extended well into the night in Dublin. The European Tour posted a video on Twitter of Lowry, still dressed in all black from his final round with his cap flipped back. He was holding the claret jug in his right hand and a beer in his left as he belted out "The Fields of Athenry," an Irish folk ballad that has become popular for Irish sports fans.

It might as well have been a celebration for all the majors this year.

Nothing could top Tiger Woods in the Masters, which dwarfed an otherwise four-month stretch of compelling outcomes.

Brooks Koepka had a major season not seen since before Woods began having surgeries, and the run is not over. He joined Woods as the only back-to-back PGA Championship winners in stroke play. He had chances in the final hour at the Masters and U.S. Open. And he was three strokes behind going into the weekend at the British Open, where he wound up in a distant tie for fourth.

Thanks to the PGA Championship moving from August to May, all Koepka has done in the last 12 months is win two majors, finish runner-up in two others and tie for fourth.

Along the way, he joined some elite company. Koepka, Woods, Jordan Spieth and Jack Nicklaus are the only players to finish no worse than fourth in all four ma-

By the numbers

2

Number of first-time major winners in 2019. Gary Woodland won the U.S. Open and Shane Lowry captured the British Open.

4

Number of players, including Brooks Koepka in 2019, to finish no worse than fourth in all four majors in the same year.

15

Number of majors Tiger Woods has won. He came from behind to earn his fifth green jacket at the Masters in April.

SOURCE: AP

ors in the same year.

"This week is disappointing, but the rest of them ... it's been great," Koepka said Sunday. "I'm not going to lie. It's been fun."

Lowry and Gary Woodland were first-time major champions, making it five straight years of at



DONALL FARMER, PA/AP

First-time major champion Shane Lowry celebrates with the claret jug in his homecoming event Tuesday in Clara, County Offaly, Ireland. Lowry won the British Open on Sunday.

least two players winning majors for the first time.

Their victories were special in their own right.

Already popular with his peers, Woodland won over golf fans around the world with his gracious support of Amy Bockerstette, the 20-year-old with Down syndrome who played one hole with him in the Phoenix Open pro-am and made par from a bunker on the 16th hole. She also inspired him with three words that he kept thinking about in the final round of the U.S. Open at Pebble Beach: "You got this."

Lowry wrote the perfect ending to the return of the British Open to Northern Ireland after 68 years. Sure, the focus of a sell-out crowd at Royal Portrush was on Rory McIlroy, Graeme Mc-

Dowell and Darren Clarke at the start. But as Lowry so beautifully and simply said when his name was on the claret jug, "Everyone knows we're all one country when it comes to golf."

Woods should win anyone's award for best performance.

Rewind to April and find Woods trailing by two shots going into the final round of the Masters, a position from which he has never won. It had been two years since he suggested at the Champions Dinner he was done, only to fly across the Atlantic in a desperate search for help before realizing fusion surgery — the fourth procedure on his lower back — was the only route to a healthy life.

Then he capped off his comeback with a flawless back nine to win a fifth green jacket and a 15th major, three short of the record set by Nicklaus. And then he took a month off and missed the cut at the PGA Championship. He tied for 21st in the U.S. Open at Pebble Beach, but only because of six birdies on his last 12 holes. He took a vacation to Thailand, spent a month away from golf and then missed the cut in the British Open.

It was a reminder that while Woods is able to win on the biggest stage — none bigger than Augusta National — he also has weeks where his back or his game, and sometimes both, don't allow him to contend.

"Things are different," he said before leaving Portrush. "And I'm going to have my hot weeks. I'm going to be there in contention with a chance to win, and I will win tournaments. But there are times when I'm just not going to be there."

It doesn't look great now. It will later. Golf now waits nearly nine months until the next major. The longer the year goes on, the stron-



CAROLYN KASTEN/AP

Gary Woodland kisses the U.S. Open trophy after winning the tournament in Pebble Beach, Calif., in June. It was Woodland's first victory in a major.

ger memories will be of what he did at the Masters far more than the other three.

If there was disappointment, look no further than McIlroy, who finished a combined 25 shots behind in the Masters, PGA Championship and U.S. Open, and lasted only two days at Royal Portrush. Ditto for Dustin Johnson, still stuck on one major, which stings even more considering he had a pair of runner-up finishes.

A generation ago, Colin Montgomerie said it was tough to win majors because of Woods, which meant fewer opportunities for everyone else. That's truer now than it was then. Spieth has gone two years without winning anything. Justin Thomas was slowed by injury.

It's tough to win. Tougher still is waiting 263 days from the end of the British Open to the start of the Masters.



JASON GETZ, ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION/TNS

Tiger Woods thrilled the sports world with his victory at Augusta in April.

SWIMMING/TOUR DE FRANCE

Ledecky returns, but US falls short in relay

By BETH HARRIS
Associated Press

GWANGJU, South Korea — The Americans got ailing Katie Ledecky back. They just couldn't overcome a world record by the Australians.

Ledecky returned after two days out of the pool while being sick to swim in the 4x200-meter freestyle relay. She rallied the U.S. to the lead on her second leg, but it wasn't enough to defend the title from 2017.

Australia won in 7 minutes, 41.50 seconds at the world championships on Thursday. Ariarne Titmus, Madison Wilson, Brianna Throssell and Emma McKeon took down the old mark of 7:42.08 set by China at the 2009 worlds in Rome during the height of the rubber suit era.

The United States took silver in 7:41.87, also going under China's old mark. Canada earned bronze.

It was still a big night at the pool for the U.S. team.

The Americans medaled in all five finals, with Caeleb Dressel and Olivia Smoliga winning golds.

After swimming her four-lap leg, Ledecky sat down in a chair behind the blocks. She got up to cheer on Katie McLaughlin during the anchor leg.

Ledecky hadn't competed since preliminaries on Monday. The following day she withdrew from the 200 free heats and the 1,500 free final because of symptoms that included dehydration and vomiting.

"We don't know exactly what caused this

all," she said. "I wouldn't have pulled out if it wasn't serious or if I wasn't concerned and scared and worried about my health."

In the middle of a sleepless night, Ledecky's phone pinged with a text from Michael Phelps. The retired 23-time Olympic gold medalist heard about her illness half a world away and was checking in.

"That meant a lot," Ledecky said. "That gave me a little bit (extra)."

Her meet had gotten off to a rough start when she was upset by Titmus in the 400 free on the first night.

This time, Simone Manuel led off against the 18-year-old Aussie, who led off against it out under world-record pace on the opening lap.

Ledecky put the U.S. in front before handing it off to Melanie Margalis, who led after 600 meters. That's when McLaughlin chased against McKeon, who put the Aussies right back in front for good.

"Just touching the wall and seeing the three others celebrate, it made me so excited," Titmus said. "I wasn't thinking about a world record, that was the key."

Ledecky's lone remaining individual event is the 800 free, with prelims on Friday.

"That went a lot better than I expected, so I'd say 95% sure that I'll swim tomorrow," she said.

Watching from the stands was Lilly King, who was disqualified from the morning heats of the 200 breaststroke and lost an appeal to be reinstated.

The American was penalized for not touching the wall with both hands in a si-



LEE JIN-MAN/AP

American Caeleb Dressel starts in the men's 100m freestyle final Thursday at the World Swimming Championships in Gwangju, South Korea. Dressel won the event.

multaneous motion in the first turn of the four-lap race.

It was a big blow for King, the outspoken doping critic aiming for a sweep of the breaststroke titles in Gwangju. She already won the 100 over Russian rival Yulia Efimova, who advanced to the 200 final as the fastest qualifier.

Dressel won swimming's glamour event, the 100 free, for his third gold and fourth medal overall.

"It hurt really bad to be honest," he said. "You don't always get that magical feeling every night but you've just got to shut the brain off and go."

Dressel touched in 46.96 seconds, the only man to dip under 47 seconds in the final. He was only 0.05 seconds off the 10-year-old world record of 46.91 set by Brazilian Cesar Cielo.

"It took 100% effort and I had some one right there on my tail for me to race," Dressel said. "I kind of shut off thinking

about the race so that helped a lot and having Kyle (Chalmers) right there."

Olympic champion Chalmers of Australia settled for silver in 47.08. Vladislav Grinev of Russia took bronze in 47.82. Dressel's other golds came in the 50 butterfly, a non-Olympic event, and the 4x100 free relay. He took silver in the mixed 4x100 medley relay.

The men's 200 individual medley title went to Daiya Seto of Japan. He touched in 1:56.14.

Jeremy Desplanches of Switzerland took silver. Chase Kalisz, the 2017 champion, earned bronze, ending the Americans' streak of winning at eight consecutive worlds.

In the women's 200 butterfly, Boglarka Kapas of Hungary won in 2:06.78. U.S. teammates Hali Flickinger and Katie Drabot took silver and bronze, respectively, after coming in as the top two qualifiers.

Alaphilippe hopes to bring title back to France

By JOHN LEICESTER
Associated Press

SAINT-MICHEL-DE-MAURIENNE, France — With the Alps spread like giant teeth in front of him and rivals speeding away, seeking to steal the precious yellow jersey off his shoulders, Julian Alaphilippe switched off the part of the brain that stops normal people from taking death-defying risks.

Because the French rider is no normal person.

And downward he plunged, flying through hairpin bends on tires barely wider than his thumb. The lunar-like landscape of giant slopes of barren scree became a blur as he hit top speeds of around 55 mph.

"It was a day of folly," Alaphilippe said.

"I unplugged my brain and I was on the limit on each bend," he said. "I did a crazy descent, where I took risks. I wanted to save my jersey."

Job done. With one big Alpine stage completed and just two more to go, Alaphilippe is still in yellow and one step closer to delivering a first Tour de France title since 1985 to his country, crossing fingers, toes and everything else that he makes it through the mountains to Paris



CHRISTOPHE ENA/AP

Tour de France leader Julian Alaphilippe climbs the Galibier pass during the 18th stage of the race, which finished Thursday in Valloire, France.

on Sunday still in the lead.

"We're all dreaming of that. Even I'm starting to imagine it," he said.

Continuing to contribute more than anyone to making this the most exciting Tour in decades, the French rider recovered from a mini-wilt on a lung-burning ascent to 8,668 feet above sea level on the Galibier pass and then

rode like a fury downhill on the other side as if his jersey depended on it.

Which it did.

With a decisive, well-placed attack on the slopes of the Galibier — the last of three climbs to above 6,500 feet on Stage 18 — Colombian rider Egan Bernal got away from Alaphilippe and ate into his lead.

A slow descent or, worse, a fall from Alaphilippe on the treacherous bends could have seen Bernal do even greater damage to his lead or perhaps erase it entirely.

But Alaphilippe is like a dog with a bone when it comes to that iconic shirt. He has now worn it for 13 stages at this Tour; the most by any French rider at a single edition since Bernard Hinault held it for 17 days in winning the race for a fifth time in 1985.

The upside for rivals trying to wrench it from his jaws is that the last two Alpine stages to the ski stations of Tignes and Val Thorens both finish with punishing ascents, meaning there'll be no downhill for Alaphilippe to recover on, as he did Thursday, if he again cracks going uphill.

Bernal and others are banking on it.

Bernal's reward for speeding away from Alaphilippe on the grind to the top of the Galibier

was a jump from fifth to second in the overall standings. Having started the day 2 minutes, 2 seconds behind Alaphilippe, Bernal is now just 90 seconds behind him, breathing down his neck and making an already thrilling Tour only more uncertain in its outcome after more than 1,850 miles of racing through Belgium and France.

"It's very good for the morale. But Julian demonstrated once again that he is very strong," Bernal said. "Everything is possible. I'm in the mix but to win the Tour is difficult."

Bernal's Ineos teammate, defending champion Geraint Thomas, tried to make it a one-two punch on the Galibier by also attacking on the last hairpins leading to the top, lined by thick, cheering crowds.

But Thomas couldn't make his offensive stick. Alaphilippe caught him again on the downhill to the finish. Thomas is still 1:35 behind Alaphilippe, as he was at the start of Stage 18, but slipped back to third overall behind Bernal.

Thomas suggested the stage simply hadn't been ridden hard enough to make Alaphilippe crack.

"We wanted it to be hard but the pace wasn't there," he said. "The call was made for Egan to go and

hopefully that would kick it off a bit, but it didn't. That's when I went as well, just to test. But at least Egan gained some time on everyone else."

Colombian rider Nairo Quintana won his first stage of this Tour, and third of his career, flying away and putting some color back into what so far had been an underwhelming Tour for the former two-time runner-up. Quintana vaulted from 12th overall to seventh, now 3:54 behind Alaphilippe.

With Quintana and Spanish riders Mikel Landa and Alejandro Valverde, Movistar now has three riders in the top 10, a possible launching pad for the team to launch more offensives.

With attacking opportunities running out for rivals, Alaphilippe knew he'd be in for a torrid time.

But he continues to confound even his own expectations.

Although his lead has shrunk, with the duo of Bernal and Thomas applying pressure from both sides, Alaphilippe continues to make converts to what is now a legion of believers with each step closer to the Champs-Élysées.

"No matter where I finish in Paris, this Tour will have left a mark on French people," he said. "And I'll have learned a lot about myself."

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Morning start times for Pac-12?

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The Pac-12 has heard plenty of criticism from fans and coaches about a third of games being played at night last year.

That has led Commissioner Larry Scott to possibly try a new scheduling approach this season.

Instead of "Pac-12 After Dark," welcome to "Breakfast with the Pac-12."

Scott said Fox and conference athletic directors are in preliminary talks about morning kickoffs for some games, which would put them in the network's key noon Eastern time slot. Any morning kickoffs, which would be at 9 a.m. Pacific and 10 a.m. Mountain, would be voluntary and not dictated by Fox.

"That would be new and somewhat out of the box, but I've tried to put everything on the table," Scott said. "I think there are some schools and markets that might respond positively."

Coaches are split about the possibility of a morning kickoff. Utah coach Kyle Whittingham said the sooner they can start, the better.

"We'd adjust. We've played those games before. It's been few and far between, but we've had those 10 a.m. kickoffs in the past. We'd jump at the chance for that," he said.

Stanford's David Shaw said he would be somewhat resistant.

"All the studies we've all read and conducted ourselves on our campus, our sleep studies, it is better for young people to perform athletically if they get a full night's sleep," Shaw said. "And I don't know that you can find any group of 18- to 22-year-old young people that are going to go to bed at 10 o'clock at night to get up at 6 o'clock in the morning to make sure they can perform athletically."

Something to prove: Oregon quarterback Justin Herbert remembers watching as a boy as Jeremiah Masoli, Darron Thomas and Heisman Trophy winner Marcus Mariota led the Ducks to conference titles.

After deciding to return to school instead of declaring for the NFL Draft, Herbert hopes to join that fraternity of quarterbacks as a senior.

Herbert threw for 3,151 yards and 29 touchdowns as a junior last season but Oregon still finished fourth in the Pac-12 North.

"We've been through the highest of highs and lowest of lows and we've seen all the success that's been at Oregon so we're capable of looking at it and realizing this isn't where we wanted to be," Herbert said. "There's a direction that we're heading and I think we need to keep going that way."

There was a narrow pick to win the Pac-12 North in the annual media poll released Wednesday after finishing one point ahead of rival Washington. The Ducks also received 11 votes to win the Pac-12 title game.

New bowl: The Pac-12 will be adding the Los Angeles Bowl to its postseason lineup when it begins in 2020.

The Los Angeles Bowl will feature a matchup between teams from the Pac-12 and Mountain West in the NFL stadium under construction. The Pac-12's commitment to the game runs through 2025.

"We are thrilled to partner with the Los Angeles Bowl and bring a Pac-12 presence to the new state-of-the-art facility at L.A. Stadium, in one of the biggest markets right in our footprint," Scott said.



SEAN M. HAFEEY, GETTY IMAGES/TNS

Tavien Feaster and his Clemson teammates celebrate their 44-16 win over Alabama in the national championship game on Jan. 7.

Still a two-team race

Dominant Clemson, Alabama remain ones to beat

By Aaron Beard

Associated Press

Clemson and Alabama have turned college football largely into a two-team show with blowouts wins, conference domination and national championships.

The Tigers and Crimson Tide have split the last four national titles, matching the combined number of losses they've had against the rest of the country. They are making league races look like foregone conclusions before they even start, even if players and coaches in the Atlantic Coast and Southeastern conferences try to argue otherwise.

"There may have been a time (like this) but I don't remember it," Atlantic Coast Conference Commissioner John Swofford said in an interview with The Associated Press during the league's preseason media days. "The first couple of years you didn't think that much about it. But we've had four years where those two programs have in a sense separated themselves competitively on the field."

"You give them their due because it's been a remarkable run for both programs that appears to not be softening."

Not much, anyway. Just about the only vulnerability they have shown has come against one another.

Dabo Swinney's Tigers are the reigning national champions after a blowout win against Nick Saban's Crimson Tide, marking Clemson's second title-game win against Alabama in three seasons. Alabama beat Clemson in a classic 2015 final, then thumped the Tigers in the 2017 semifinals on the way to another title.

Along the way, both have gone 55-4 dating to the 2015 season, including 53-2 against the rest of college football.

Georgia, which lost to Alabama to end the

By the numbers

4

Number of consecutive years either Alabama or Clemson has won the national championship.

11

Number of consecutive seasons Alabama has won at least 10 games, including national titles in 2009, 2011 and 2012.

8

Number of consecutive seasons Clemson has won at least 10 games, including national titles in 2016 and 2018.

2017 season and in last year's SEC championship game, is the only other team to appear in a national final amid the run.

"I mean, those are realities of competition," SEC Commissioner Greg Sankey told the AP. "And one should not assume it will always be that way or it's going to stay in place, even though there are preseason projections. I get that. But every week is part of that determination. ... It's just a reality that's played out. And there are reasons for that."

Start with the continuity at the top. Saban has been in Alabama since 2007 and has guided the Crimson Tide to 11 straight seasons with at least 10 wins, including national titles in 2009, 2011 and 2012 before the launch of the College Football Playoff to become the nation's unquestioned top program.

Now the Tigers have joined them under Swinney, who took over during the 2008 season and has directed eight straight seasons with 10 or more wins — including the 2016 and 2018 title runs for the program's first crowns since 1981.

The results are remarkably similar, too. Along with the matching overall records, Clemson and Alabama each are 34-2 against league opponents the past four seasons. For Alabama, 28 of those 34 wins against SEC teams have been by double-figure margins, while it's 26 of 34 for Clemson against the ACC.

Alabama has won the SEC three times in that four-year span and was the heavy favorite again when the league released preseason picks. The same was true for Clemson in the ACC, where the Tigers will try to become the first team in any power conference to win five straight league championship games.

There is certainly a chance they will meet again in the playoff.

AP sports writers David Brandt and John Zenor in Hoover, Ala., contributed to this report.

SOURCE: Associated Press

NFL

Panthers will keep close eye on Cam's arm

Carolina will closely monitor QB's reps in training camp after his offseason surgery

By STEVE REED
Associated Press

SPARTANBURG, S.C. — While Cam Newton has been medically cleared to throw at training camp following offseason shoulder surgery, Panthers coach Ron Rivera said the team's training staff will closely monitor the quarterback's reps, and coaches will script his plays daily.

"We have a plan," Rivera said Wednesday. "Obviously it will be structured around our installation. So the things that we have going on with our install will dictate what he does."

The Panthers arrived at Wake Forest College for their 25th training camp with plenty of questions, not the least of which is the status of Newton's right shoulder. It became problematic last season, limiting the 2015 league MVP from throwing more than 20 yards downfield.

When the Panthers needed to throw a Hail Mary pass, Newton was subbed out.

The 30-year-old Newton sat out the last two games of the season after the Panthers were eliminated from playoff contention. He had arthroscopic surgery in January.

When asked if there will be any restrictions on how far Newton can throw the football, Rivera said, "well, we will see."

"We believe he is ready to roll," Rivera added. "He had a good offseason. He had a good break from what we are told. Again, the proof is in the pudding."

Newton's rehab hardly is the only question the Panthers have

following a 7-9 season. Personnel issues abound with several key veterans gone.

Defensive end Julius Peppers and center Ryan Kalil retired, linebacker Thomas Davis wasn't re-signed, and the team released cornerback Captain Munnerlyn. Between them they had played 43 seasons for Carolina.

Middle linebacker Luke Kuechly said it's strange not having them around, particularly his good buddy Davis, who spent 14 seasons with Carolina before signing this offseason with the Los Angeles Chargers.

"It will give me a team in the AFC to root for," Kuechly said. "I'm going to miss having him here; we're all going to miss having him. But that is just kind of how the game goes and guys understand that."

Rivera said replacing that experience won't be easy.

The team drafted Brian Burns as an edge rusher to help fill the void left by Peppers, and signed free agent Matt Paradis from Denver to take Kalil's spot. Long-time linebacker-in-waiting Shaq Thompson takes over for Davis, while the team is still looking for a nickel back to replace Munnerlyn. Free safety is another position up for grabs.

Also, the offensive line will need to mesh, with Paradis taking over at center and second-round pick Greg Little expected to start right away at left tackle.

"We have a lot of new moving parts," Rivera said. "We lost some savvy veterans who have been around for a long time and they have moved on. So we have



Carolina Panthers quarterback Cam Newton throws during the team's practice in Charlotte, N.C. While Newton has been medically cleared to throw, he will be closely watched after having shoulder surgery.

some guys who have to step up."

There is also the matter of keeping Greg Olsen healthy. Olsen is the only tight end in NFL history with three straight 1,000-yard seasons, but the three-time Pro Bowler missed 16 games over the past two years after twice breaking his foot. That ended a streak of 144 straight NFL games played.

Olsen said he's been "100% (healthy) for months," adding that his training regimen has been extremely productive.

But the 12-year NFL veteran acknowledged the uncertainty that the future holds, saying "I've yet to find anything that prevents broken bones. So if you know of anything, let me know."

Carolina did get one major

question answered Wednesday as Burns, the team's first-round draft pick, signed a four-year contract with a team option for a fifth season. That means all of Carolina's draft picks will be ready to go when practice begins Thursday night.

Burns, selected No. 16 overall, was one of three NFL first-round picks who had not yet signed.



JOHN BAZEMORE/AP

This season Eli Manning enters his 16th training camp with the New York Giants. He'll be 39 when the season is over, so it also could be his final training camp as a player.

By TOM ROCK
Newsday

NEW YORK — Eli Manning reported to training camp with the Giants for the 16th time on Wednesday.

Sixteenth and final time?

Manning recognizes that is a possibility. Maybe even a strong one. He'll be 39 years old when this season is over, he's in the last year of his contract with the Giants, and he'll spend the rest of his career with the team trying to keep a step ahead of sixth overall draft pick Daniel Jones, who was brought in to replace him.

The veteran quarterback is taking some time this summer to absorb as much as he can of the experience of being a Giant. If for no other reason than at this point next year, he might not be.

"I think the longevity of things, you have more appreciation," he said of feeling "blessed" (a word he has not used much in the past) to be back for 2019. "You don't know how long you get to play

'I want those guys to experience some of the successes we've had here with the Giants in the past.'

Eli Manning
New York Giants quarterback

this or how long you get to do it. You don't know what the future holds. When you are younger, you assume you are going to keep playing, you just assume you'll be back playing and you don't think about it."

That's not to say that Manning is in a reflective mood. Just more aware of how fragile it is and how unique his tenure with the team has been. No one, after all, has ever suited up for a 16th season with the Giants.

"I think about the players we have on this team. I want those guys to experience some of the successes we've had here with the Giants in the past," he said. "To make (the) playoffs, to win championships, to get on winning streaks and feel like you are playing better than anybody else in the league at that moment. Those are fun and great memories, but I'm not reflecting on those. I want these guys who haven't had that to experience that."

If he can't succeed in guiding the Giants to wins early, the Giants may decide it's time to see what the kid can do.

Manning said having Jones in camp nipping at his heels doesn't change his approach to this summer.

"Hey, I have a job to go out there and do my best," he said. "I love to win and succeed and do my best and have great games, great practices. To win, to have that feeling of winning in the locker room, that's what drives you, to create those feelings."

Manning nears end of the Eli era

NFL

Chiefs TE Kelce back after ankle surgery

By DAVE SKRETTA
Associated Press

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — Travis Kelce was back to catching passes for the Kansas City Chiefs on Wednesday.

If he could do it on the beach, he could do it on a football field.

The two-time All-Pro tight end missed the entire offseason after having surgery to solidify an ankle that had become loose over time. Kelce said he had felt discomfort in it the past couple of years, mainly on Monday and Tuesday, when his entire body was still sore from a Sunday game.

"I mean, it was nothing I was doing," he said. "It was just the misfortune, over the course of my career I rolled my ankle so many times that the ligaments in there were kind of stretched out."

The procedure early this spring essentially tightened up the ankle, and it kept Kelce from doing any running for about three months. That means he spent the team's voluntary summer workouts and its mandatory minicamp on the sidelines, absorbing constant "Coach Kelce" ribbing from teammates.

Kelce insisted he would be ready for the start of camp, but a watershed moment may have come during a recent trip to Turks and Caicos with quarterback Patrick Mahomes and wide receivers Demarcus Robinson and Gehrig Dieter. Mahomes was throwing passes to the other three on the soft, sandy beach, and the instability was a good test to see just how strong Kelce's ankle had become.

"There were times my ankle got caught in an awkward position, just running around," he said, "and I can tell you, last year, two years ago, that thing would have been rolled and I would have been just sitting there, watching guys catch passes on the beach instead of doing it myself."

Rookies, quarterbacks and select veterans reported to Missouri Western State University for the start of camp on Tuesday,

and their first workout was on a postcard-perfect Wednesday morning.

Kelce was right in the mix, catching the first couple of passes of 7-on-7 and team drills.

He didn't have to report early: The rest of the veterans arrive Friday with the first full-squad workout scheduled for Saturday. After all, Kelce has earned that right after three consecutive seasons of at least 1,000 yards receiving, and a career-best 1,336 yards and 10 touchdowns last year.

But the 29-year-old Kelce, who inked a five-year, \$46 million contract extension in January 2016, figured it was best to arrive with the rookies. It not only gave him a few extra practices to get back into football shape, it also provided an opportunity for him to mentor the younger players.

"I'm willing to work. That's the biggest thing," Kelce said. "It's a little different when you see a guy out here going through the motions, walking the walk. Just being out here, working with the guys, showing them, 'This is how we do it here.' Showing them by example."

Kelce has his work cut out for him.

The Chiefs are perilously thin behind him at tight end after losing Demetrius Harris in free agency, and they could be in the market for a veteran backup once roster cuts happen.

But for now, former Oklahoma quarterback-turned-journeyman NFL tight end Blake Bell is No. 2 on the depth chart with unheralded Deon Yelder trailing him.

"I think we're going to be OK," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said. "I think putting pads on, who's going to be able to play on the line of scrimmage and do what Demetrius did there? Who's going to be able to do that is hard to tell right now, but we'll find out."

Regardless of how the depth chart shakes out, the Chiefs know who their No. 1 tight end will be.

"I'm 100 percent fine about there," Kelce said. "Didn't have any issues today."



CHARLIE RIEDEL/AP

Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce, a two-time All-Pro, spent the offseason recovering from surgery to repair 'loose' ligaments in his left ankle. Kelce said he is '100 percent fine' while speaking to media after training camp on Wednesday in St. Joseph, Mo.



ANDREW MILLS/TNS

New York cornerback Brian Poole participates in drills during minicamp in April. Jets players reported for training camp on Wednesday with renewed optimism after a disappointing 2018 campaign.

'Gang Green' riding high

Darnold: 'Good vibes' around new-look Jets

By DENNIS WASZAK JR.
Associated Press

FLORHAM PARK, N.J. — Sam Darnold believes there's something a lot different about the new New York Jets these days.

Sure, the start of training camp breeds overwhelming optimism and positive chatter all around the NFL. But the second-year quarterback insists there's more to it than just cliché-filled declarations.

This is real. Darnold can feel it.

"The whole building, you can kind of sense a ... almost a rebirth," Darnold said Wednesday as Jets players reported for training camp.

"I mean, I feel like the whole building is very energized, there's a lot of energy within the building, a lot of good vibes," he added. "For us, it's just feeding off that and that happens naturally. We can already feel it in the building. ... And I feel like as long as you have that good energy, we can win with that."

Well, positive energy is sustained only by winning — something the Jets haven't done very much of lately. They're coming off a 4-12 campaign and haven't made the playoffs since the 2010 season.

But, as far as the Jets are concerned, they aren't far from putting that postseason slump — currently the NFL's third-longest — behind them.

"We're going to play meaningful games in the end of November and December," coach Adam Gase said. "That's what we're going to do."

It wasn't the kind of bold declaration Rex Ryan used to routinely make headlines during his tenure as coach. But, Gase has



SETH WENIG/AP

The New York Jets have put last year's 4-12 record far behind them according to quarterback Sam Darnold, pictured, who says that with a revamped roster, there is a sense of 'rebirth' around the franchise.

allowed some of his personality to trickle out — unlike the mostly tight-lipped Todd Bowles, who was fired after failing to make the playoffs in his four seasons.

Gase was also briefly unemployed after the season, with the Dolphins moving on after one postseason appearance in three years. The 41-year-old coach has plenty to prove, and is charged with leading a franchise that has remained stuck on one Super Bowl appearance for the last 50 years.

Gase knows the dubious history since the glory days of Joe Namath and understands nothing but bringing home another Lombardi Trophy will be considered a success. He believes this group of Jets players, at the very least, is starting out with the right attitude.

"There's some good juice in our building right now," Gase said. "We're ready. We're 0-0. It's going to be all about how we come together. We all know we're starting at 0-0 and it's time to go to work."

Gase and new general manager Joe Douglas, who replaced the

fired Mike Maccagnan in May, are working to put together a squad that can consistently be in the mix for a postseason spot.

It all starts with Darnold, of course, and how he develops this season after an up-and-down first year in the NFL. He said he's in the "latter stages" of learning Gase's playbook, and feels "much more comfortable out there" as he prepares for his second training camp.

Newcomers such as running back Le'Veon Bell, linebacker C.J. Mosley, wide receiver Jamison Crowder and offensive lineman Kelechi Osemele highlight a roster that has raised expectations within the Jets' facility.

"A lot of wins," Darnold said when asked what he thought the team could achieve this season.

It all has Gase giddy about the arrival of training camp — where the team can finally put on the pads and bring all those positive vibes out to the practice field.

"The last couple of days have seemed like forever," Gase said. "Everybody's just ready to get going."

NFL

Cousins facing rising scrutiny

By BRIAN HALL
Associated Press

EAGAN, Minn. — Kirk Cousins is well aware of the label on an NFL career left largely unfulfilled, a quarterback with plenty of impressive stats but not enough team success.

The scrutiny intensified with the fully guaranteed \$84 million contract that Cousins signed with the Minnesota Vikings last year, a season that ultimately ended for him like all the others: in disappointment, without a playoff win.

This year, Cousins is determined to change that perception.

"It's going to come down to those 16 regular-season games and then beyond that. Unfortunately, you grind in training camp and you get to Labor Day weekend and you look around and you're like, 'All that work, and I've got nothing to show for it yet,'" Cousins said Wednesday.

"Hopefully you're laying a good foundation and hopefully it shows on Sundays in the fall, but the nature of this next month and a half, whether it's really good or really bad, it really isn't what the narrative becomes on you. You have to translate that into a very good season."

His first year with the Vikings was eerily similar to his time with Washington. Though he has passed for at least 4,000 yards and 25 touchdowns in four straight seasons and been regularly among the NFL leaders in completion rate, including a career-best mark (70.1%) last year that ranked second in the league, Cousins is just 34-37-2 as a starter. He lost his only playoff game start in 2015.

The offseason priority for the front office in Minnesota, thus, was to make Cousins more comfortable. He has, in turn, tried to do his part to take that critical step forward in 2019 and carry a team with Super Bowl aspirations along with him.

"I'm pretty much a 500 quarterback in my career so far, and I don't think that's where you want to be," Cousins said recently. "That's not why you're brought in or people are excited about you. If I don't play well, if I don't have gaudy statistics, but we win multiple playoff games this year, the narrative will be I went to the next level. I may not walk off the field every day feeling like I did, but if we win, that's the life of the quarterback, you are then at the next level. If I have my best year yet in 2019 but we're 8-8, I didn't go to the next level."

Cousins is again partaking in the first three days of training camp, which is for rookies and other inexperienced players. The



Jim Mone/AP

Vikings quarterback Kirk Cousins demonstrates catching during the team's training camp, which opened with rookies and select veterans on Tuesday in Eagan, Minn.

other veterans don't need to take the field until Friday.

"I think one thing that I can do beyond just playing the best I can is to start really coaching and leading other people so that I can never walk off the field saying, 'Hey, I did my part but so and so didn't,'" Cousins said. "That can't happen as an NFL quarterback. You have to be bringing others along so that isn't a point you're making at the end of a practice or a game."

The biggest change to the scheme now directed by offensive coordinator Kevin Stefanski was the hiring of Gary Kubiak as an offensive adviser. Kubiak was the offensive coordinator on two Super Bowl winners in Denver for Mike Shanahan, who later be-

came head coach of the Redskins for Cousins' first two years.

In front of Cousins, the offensive line was reworked with first-round draft pick Garrett Bradbury at center, Pat Elflein moving from center to left guard and Josh Kline signing as a free agent to be the right guard.

Time can also be a benefit.

"His comfort level, him understanding what's being asked of him to do," general manager Rick Spielman said. "They will do things to make sure that he is comfortable in the offense, that will fit his strengths as a quarterback. You can have all the gaudy stats in the world, but this business is always going to come down to wins and losses."

No need to tell Cousins that.

Browns unafraid of expectations

By BRIAN DULK
Associated Press

BEREA, Ohio — Browns coach Freddie Kitchens doesn't want his players fearing the sky-high expectations being placed on them.

"I want everybody to understand this: Our goal here with the Cleveland Browns is always to win the Super Bowl," he said. "I don't want to ever be scared to talk about what our goal is."

"If you're not going to jump out of the airplane, then don't put the parachute on. I want guys who put the parachute on."

The first-year head coach and general manager John Dorsey conducted a joint news conference Wednesday on the eve of training camp, which will be held at the franchise's suburban headquarters.

All tickets for the 15 open practices have been distributed, reflecting the excitement surrounding the Browns after rookie quarterback Baker Mayfield led them to a 5-8-1 season.

Adding wide receiver Odell Beckham Jr. and defensive end Olivier Vernon — both Pro Bowl players — has changed the perception of a team that finished 0-16 two years ago and went 635 days and 19 games without a victory until beating the Jets on Sept. 20, 2018.

"Odell is a great player and I like great players that want to win," Kitchens said. "I also like great players that want to be themselves. I like great players that can get open and make big catches. All those things, I think he does very well. Our job as coaches is to put him into position to make plays."

Mayfield, Beckham and wide receiver Jarvis Landry attempted to expedite the process by working out together in California. Mayfield also spent considerable time cultivating his celebrity and got married, but Kitchens isn't concerned about his focus drift-

ing away from football.

"Baker knows what he's doing, don't ever have a misconception about that," said Kitchens, who served as Cleveland's running backs coach and offensive coordinator last season.

"Baker hasn't changed from the first day he got here as a rookie. I want him to be who he is, but also, he's a 24-year-old guy and he's got a lot of life to live. He's not going to change for anyone. He's always going to speak the truth. That's what I like about him."

One area of concern is running back, where Duke Johnson publicly requested a trade after the team signed ex-Chiefs standout Kareem Hunt. Johnson did report to camp on time.

Second-year pro Nick Chubb is the starter, and Hunt was suspended for eight games following an act of domestic violence that prompted Kansas City to release him. He has been placed on the active/non-football injury list with a groin problem.

Dorsey said he has spoken with Johnson's agent, Drew Rosenhaus, and termed their discussions productive. He also addressed Hunt's recent argument outside a downtown Cleveland bar, noting the team and NFL consider it a non-issue.

"Freddie and I both had a chance to sit down with him," Dorsey said. "Kareem understands there are no guarantees in life. He is going about exactly what he has been going about. He is working his fanny off, on the field as well as off the field."

Kitchens expects to see similar energy from the rest of the roster now that camp has arrived.

"This is the only business in the world where you hire 90 guys, only to fire half of them," he said. "Right now, we're just a bunch of individual good players. Until we do something, that's all we are is a bunch of good players. This game is about winning. That's all this is about every day."



TONY DEJAK/AP

Browns head coach Freddie Kitchens, left, looks over at general manager John Dorsey as Dorsey answers questions at the team's training camp facility in Berea, Ohio on Wednesday.

OLYMPICS

Analysis

Winning is all that matters

US will dominate the podium in Tokyo, but at what cost?

By EDDIE PELLIS
Associated Press

For decades, the question at the Summer Olympics hasn't been whether the United States will top the medals table, but by how much.

If anyone on U.S. soil has a problem with that — and given the headlines of the last few years, plenty of people do — well, imagine the alternative.

Item No. 4 under the heading "Purposes" in the 1978 law that created the U.S. Olympic Committee is the mandate for the federation to construct "the most competent ... representation possible in each event of the Olympic Games, the Paralympic Games, and Pan-American Games."

That's a long-winded way of saying "win lots of medals," and since the break up of the Soviet Union, nobody has come close to winning as many as the U.S.

But after being criticized by abuse victims, athletes' representatives, lawmakers and a couple of blue-ribbon panels for adhering too closely to a "money-for-medals" prototype that served the U.S. well on the playing field, new leaders at the USOC are trying to reshape their mission. They want the new USOC to focus more fully on the overall welfare of athletes instead of simply what they can contribute to the win column.

It's a work in progress, and how well that overhaul melds with the USOC's core mission of winning medals will come into sharp focus starting a year from Thursday, when the first champions are crowned at the Tokyo Olympics.

Gracenate Sports projects the United States to win 126 medals — a number that would beat second-place China by 45 and outpace the total from 2016 by five (There are more medals at stake next year because of added sports).

If the ultimate number falls short of that target — or whatever internal targets the USOC has set for itself — expect some second-guessing about the wisdom of the newly reconstituted vision. If the number swells too large — well, expect some second-guessing in that case, too.

Regardless, the bottom line remains unchanged from what it's been for years: Fourth-place finishers and inspirational stories are nice, but NBC and U.S. sponsors also want to see some winners for all those billions they fork over.

"People are buying the Olympics before they know the results, but historically, Team USA has been extraordinarily competitive," said Dan Lovinger, NBC's executive vice president of adver-



TIMOTHY D. EASLEY/AP

Simone Biles and the U.S. gymnastics team won eight of the 18 medals available at the 2018 world championships and widened the gap between them and the rest of the world.

tising sales. "We expect them to be again."

A no-win situation for the USOC?

It might seem that way if you pay attention to what's been happening in the boardrooms in the wake of Larry Nassar and a number of abuse cases that have led to a near-complete turnover of the USOC's top staff — an overhaul many critics say hasn't gone far enough.

Once the torch is lit, however, the public pays attention to the scoreboard, not the meetings.

Though Michael Phelps is gone, the U.S. swimming team, led by Katie Ledecky, looks like a good bet to dominate as it always does.

With Jamaica's Usain Bolt out of the mix, there are few roadblocks in the way of the Americans grabbing 30 medals in track and field.

And through all the trouble and turmoil in gymnastics, Simone Biles is expected to be back and there aren't any countries narrowing the gap with the United States.

A look at some of the marquee sports — and other spots where the U.S. is expected to rake it in:

Gymnastics: While the state of USA Gymnastics as a national governing body remains very much in flux — the organization filed for bankruptcy late last year in an effort to ward off a decertification effort by the USOC — the chasm between the women's Olympic program and the rest of the world remains as large as ever, thanks to Biles. The American women won eight of the 18 medals available at the 2018 world championships, with Biles having a hand in six of them. The U.S. won the team final by nearly nine points (8.932), more than double the gap between second-place Russia and eighth-place Germany (4.262).

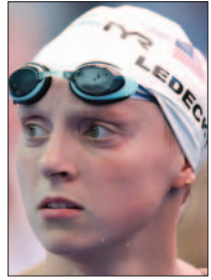
Track and field: This sport will have issues clawing its way into the mainstream with Bolt on the sideline. But that doesn't add up to trouble for the U.S. In fact, quite the opposite. With the 100 and 200 up for grabs again, Noah Lyles and Christian Coleman will be in the mix — along with defending world champion Justin Gatlin — to be the world's next Olympic sprint champions. On the women's side, 400-meter hurdler Sydney McLaughlin is a

name to watch. And don't forget about Allyson Felix, who will be 34 in 2020. She's one medal shy of tying Carl Lewis for the most of any U.S. track and field athlete.

Swimming: For the first time since 2000, Phelps won't be competing. The most decorated athlete in Olympic history with 28 medals, including 23 gold, retired after Rio. Ledecky is the star of the U.S. team, which is still in transition in the post-Phelps era, but should do just fine in a sport that awards more medals than any sport this side of track.

Beach volleyball: The Americans have two of the top four teams in the world in the women's Olympic qualification race, and are a threat to claim two medals. Five-time Olympian (and three time beach gold medalist) Kerri Walsh Jennings is attempting to qualify for Tokyo with her third different partner.

Basketball: The U.S. men will return to the site of their only loss under Mike Krzyzewski, way back in 2006 in the world championships. But don't count on another surprise. With unmatched depth, the Americans have been able to reload with stars, while



LEE JIN-MAN/AP

Katie Ledecky will lead a United States swim team that's expected to rack up medals next summer at the Tokyo Olympics.

the veterans from powers such as Spain and Argentina have moved on and not been replaced. The women haven't lost a game at the Olympics since 1992, and won their eight games in 2016 by an average of 37 points.

Around the village: The Williams sisters love the Olympics, and the U.S. women have other medal-worthy contenders, including Sloane Stephens and Madison Keys. ... The U.S. currently has eight of the top 12 in the men's golf rankings. But a maximum of four can represent any single country. ... Skateboarding is dominated by Americans, which should make the qualifying contests more competitive than the Olympics themselves. ... Gracenate projects the U.S. winning medals in 30 sports, which would break the record of 28 that it tied in 2016.

AP sports writers Howard Fendrich, Pat Graham, Will Graves, Beth Harris, Doug Feinberg, Jimmy Golen and Brian Mahoney contributed to this report.

By the numbers

126

Number of medals Gracenate Sports projects the U.S. to win at the 2020 Olympics.

30

Number of medals handed out in track and field, the most of any sport in the Olympics.

28

Number of sports in which the U.S. won medals in Rio de Janeiro, a number it's expected to eclipse in Tokyo.

SOURCE: Associated Press

TRACK AND FIELD

Young hurdler balances expectations



LISE ASERUD, NTB SCANPIX, ABOVE, LEE JIN-NAN, BELOW/AP

Above: Sydney McLaughlin of the United States poses after winning the 400-meter hurdles at the IAAF Diamond League competition on June 13 in Oslo, Norway. Below: McLaughlin, just 16, competes in the 400-meter hurdles during the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.



At only 19, McLaughlin among favorites to win 400 hurdles at US championships

By PAT GRAHAM
Associated Press

Sydne McLaughlin can juggle. She can also ride a unicycle. And she has been known to juggle and ride a unicycle at the same time.

"But I haven't done both of them at the same time in a long time," the 400-meter hurdler added. "I'm getting older now."

About to turn 20 next month, she is juggling quite a few things these days — a new coach, living on the West Coast, making the transition from college to the pro circuit and the weight of lofty expectations. Her name constantly pops up among the ones to watch heading into the Tokyo Olympics next summer.

That's hardly a surprise: In 2016 and at just 16, McLaughlin became the youngest U.S. track and field athlete to qualify for the Olympics in more than four decades.

Pressure doesn't bother her.

She just keeps her eye on the prize like she did as a kid when her dad would coax her to run with the reward of a chocolate candy bar.

Winning is her incentive now — and it's just as sweet.

"For me it's kind of just focusing on myself and making sure I'm doing everything possible to be successful," McLaughlin said ahead of the U.S. track and field championships, which start Thursday at Drake Stadium in Des Moines, Iowa.

A year ago, McLaughlin turned pro after spending a season at Kentucky and winning the NCAA 400 hurdles crown.

Since then, the New Jersey native has been adjusting to life in Los Angeles and working with 2004 Olympic 100-meter gold medalist Joanna Hayes. McLaughlin won her Diamond League 400 hurdles debut in Oslo, Norway, last month with a victory over U.S. teammate and defending Olympic champion Dalilah Muhammad.

That despite knocking down the first hurdle.

"It's good to know the strength was there," said McLaughlin, who also won in Monaco on July 12. "But definitely have to work on the hurdles form and everything."

McLaughlin will be one of the favorites when the 400 hurdles start Friday. It's a loaded field that also includes Muhammad, 2015 world champion silver medalist Shamier Little and bronze medalist Cassandra Tate, '16 Olympic bronze medalist Ashley Spencer and reigning world champion Kori Carter. Since Carter has an automatic spot to worlds in Doha this fall, there are three more spots up for grabs in the event.

"There's so much depth," McLaughlin said. "It's particularly hard to make that team."

McLaughlin teamed up in early November with Hayes, who ran the 400 hurdles before switching over to the 100 hurdles. Any chance McLaughlin makes a similar move?

"We always joke about it," McLaughlin said. "We'll have to see about that one."

One hurdle at a time. Her focus remains on steadily learning the nuances of the taxing 400 hurdles event.

"She's talented and there's no need to put everything on the line

or everything into it in one year," Hayes explained. "Give her room to grow and make strides."

Hayes gets asked this often: Can McLaughlin one day break the world record? The mark sits at 52.34 seconds set by Yuliya Pechonkina of Russia in 2003. McLaughlin's top time is 52.75 seconds, which she ran in May 2018.

"We don't talk about, 'OK, we're going to try to break the world record,'" Hayes said. "We go in there and try to execute a great race. If you do that, eventually records will come."

Growing up, McLaughlin wasn't all that jazzed about running. Her father, Willie, would provide plenty of motivation in the form of candy.

He said, "If you run I'll give you a chocolate bar." I ran the 100 meters and actually won," recalled McLaughlin, who started a juggling club while in high school and recently got back into the hobby. "I think I was more excited about the chocolate bar than the fact I won. I guess he lured me into the sport."

She is still motivated by reward — a good performance earns her either a nap or a cheeseburger.

McLaughlin comes from an athletic family. Her dad was a 400-meter semifinalist at the 1984 Olympic Trials and her mother, Mary, ran in high school. Her two brothers and sister also have competitive running backgrounds.

And when the siblings get together, it becomes rivalry time. Sydney pairs with her brother Taylor and they're pitted against her sister Morgan and brother Ryan. The competitions range from bowling to board games to push-ups.

"We usually win," cracked McLaughlin, the Gatorade national high school track athlete of the year in '16 and '17. "Anything that involves winning you can best believe that we're competing with each other."

In her spare time, she's active on social media and offers tips to kids not that much younger than her.

"I definitely think having people look up to you and ask you for advice drives you to want to do better and continue to have success," McLaughlin said. "I have fun with being that role model that does things the right way."

'She's talented and there's no need to put everything on the line or everything into it in one year. Give her room to grow and make strides.'

Joanna Hayes

2004 Olympic 100-meter hurdles gold medalist on Sydney McLaughlin

SPORTS

More camp coverage inside:

- Cleveland coach Kitchens: Browns aren't afraid of Super Bowl expectations, Page 61
- TE Kelce ready to go for Chiefs, Page 60

Good Vibes



Optimism
reigns as
'reborn' Jets
open training camp

NFL, Page 60

Pictured, from top: First-year New York Jets head coach Adam Gase; quarterback Sam Darnold; and linebacker C.J. Mosley.

TNS photos

Clemson, 'Bama still teams to beat » College football, Page 58



027664 520705